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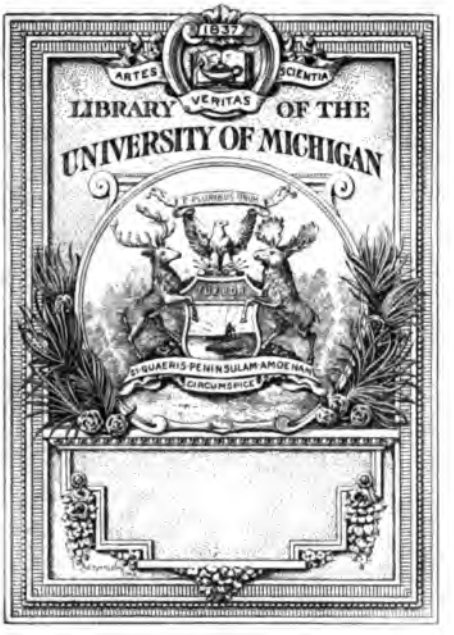
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# THE MEMOIRS OF
# ADMIRAL LORD CHARLES BERESFORD

# THE MEMOIRS OF ADMIRAL LORD CHARLES BERESFORD

## WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

WITH TWENTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. II

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, & COMPANY
1914

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(*The "Notes" are by L. COPE CORNFORD*)

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# THE MEMOIRS OF ADMIRAL LORD CHARLES BERESFORD

## CHAPTER XXIX

## THE SOUDAN WAR (*Continued*)

### VII. The Fight to Reach the River

"We had beat the foe at Abu Klea, and now had marched all night,
Parching with thirst, each longed to see the first faint streak of light,
For all expected with the dawn to see the river flow.
'Twas there all right, but in our path stood thousands of the foe;
We halted, and a barricade of biscuit boxes made,
And swift their deadly bullets flew round that frail barricade,
And many a gallant fellow dropped before the welcome cry,
'Form square' was heard, 'we must advance, and reach the Nile or die.'"

*Songs of the Camel Corps* (Sergeant H. Eagle, R.M.C.C.)

BY the time the wounded were picked up, the dead counted, and their weapons destroyed, and the square was ready to start, it was half-past three in the afternoon. There was no food, and hardly any water. The soldiers suffered dreadfully from thirst; their tongues were so swollen as to cause intense pain, their lips black, their mouths covered with white mucus. Several men fainted. Luckily I had put a skin of water upon a camel just before the action, so that the men of the Naval Brigade all had a drink, and there was a little water over for the wounded. The sailors persisted in smoking; they said it did them good; so I let them.

The wells of Abu Klea lay some three miles ahead. The Cavalry, the horses weak, emaciated, and tormented by thirst, were sent on to reconnoitre. The square followed slowly. So short-handed was the Naval Brigade that I had to clap on to the drag-ropes myself. We hauled the gun through the sand and across nullahs and over rocks till about 5.30 p.m., when we came to the wells, which were small pools in the soil, and which, when they were emptied, slowly filled again. The water was yellow and of the consistency of cream; but it was cool, sweet, and delicious.

Three hundred volunteers from the Heavy Camel Regiment, the Guards' Camel Regiment, and the Mounted Infantry left the wells soon after sunset to march the six weary miles back again to fetch the camels and commissariat. They marched and worked all night; yet their lot was better than ours; for they got food and could keep warm. As for ourselves, we lay down where we were, without food or blankets, and suffered the coldest night in my remembrance. It is suggested to me by a friend who has seen much active service in many wars, that, owing probably to the exhaustion of the nerves, men are far more susceptible to cold after a battle. He himself recalls the night after Magersfontein as the coldest he ever experienced. At any rate, we were cold to the marrow that night of 17th–18th January; cold and bruised and very hungry, the most of us having had no food for twenty-four hours. I must here record my admiration of the medical staff, who worked hard all night, doing their utmost for the sick and wounded.

I sat on an ammunition box and shivered. The wound upon my finger, where the Arab's spear had cut it, though slight, was disproportionately painful. Lieutenant Douglas Dawson (of the Coldstream Guards) came to me and asked me if I had any tobacco. I told him that my tobacco, together with my field-glasses, had departed into the desert with my steed County Waterford, which had run away. Dawson had six cigarettes, of which he gave me three. I would cheerfully have given a year's income for them, as

I told him. We agreed that it was hard to have to die without knowing who had won the Derby.

At about seven o'clock next morning (18th January) the convoy returned with the rest of the camels and the commissariat. We had our first meal for some thirty-six hours. Then we went to work to build a fort in which to leave the wounded, and to prepare for the march to the river, some 25 miles distant. A burying party went back to the field of Abu Klea and interred our dead. Some prisoners captured by the convoy on its way back to the camp, reported that Omdurman had fallen; but the information was not made generally known. I did not hear it until we reached Metemmeh.

Sir Herbert Stewart then determined to reach the Nile before next morning. A small detachment of the Royal Sussex was left to guard the wounded. The column marched about 3.30 p.m. It was a desperate venture, for the men had had no sleep for two nights, had fought a battle in between, had suffered agonies of thirst and the exhaustion of hunger. But Sir Herbert Stewart had learned from the prisoners that the enemy who had fought at Abu Klea were no more than the advanced guard of the main body, which would probably come out from Metemmeh to meet us, and that the fall of Omdurman had released a number of the Mahdi's army; and the general wished to reach the river before fighting again. He hoped to be upon the Nile before daylight. In any event, the enterprise of the Desert Column was a forlorn hope; and by this time we all knew it.

Cameron, war correspondent of *The Standard*, came to me with a very grave face. He was not alarmed for his own safety, for he was a most gallant man; but he feared for the Column.

"Lord Charles," he said, "have you any influence with General Stewart? If so, for God's sake implore him not to go on without reinforcements. I know these people and he does not."

The next time I saw poor Cameron was upon the following day, when he was lying with a bullet-hole in his forehead, dead.

The Column was guided by Ali Loda, a friendly desert freebooter who had been captured during the first march to Jakdul. He was accompanied by Captain Verner and Colonel Barrow. Half the force marched on foot, in case of attack; the mounted men each leading a camel. The commissariat camels were tied in threes, nose to tail, the leading camel being ridden by a native driver. Although both men and camels were tired out, they went bravely along the track leading across a wide plain, with grass and scrub in the distance. By the time it was dark, we had come to the long savas grass, and the tracks, hitherto plain to see in the brilliant starlight, became obscured. Then began the confusion. By this time men and camels were utterly exhausted. There was no moon, but no lights were allowed, and all orders were to be given in a whisper. The camels, weary and famished, lagged and tumbled down; their riders went to sleep and fell off; the leading camels fell behind; and the rear camels, most of them riderless, straggled up to the front. The formation was totally disordered. In the darkness the confusion speedily became inextricable. When there was a halt to wait for stragglers, the men lay down and dropped asleep. About this time the Column blundered into a wood of acacia trees armed with long sharp thorns. There ought to have been no such wood; indeed, Count Gleichen avers that no one ever found it afterwards.

In this state of affairs, the Column lost in the dark in an unknown country, utterly worn out, and inextricably tangled upon itself, I made the Naval Brigade unspan and gave them tea. Then we struggled on, hour after hour. As for silence, the noise might have been heard and probably was heard at Metemmeh. An immense multitudinous murmur went up from the unhappy mob of swearing men and roaring, squealing, grumbling camels. A longer or more exhausting nightmare I never suffered.

Daylight came at last. It was about 6 o'clock on the morning of 19th January. The least we had hoped was to have come within sight of the Nile. But when the Column halted there was no Nile; only a long gravel slope rising before us, set with scattered trees rising from the eternal savas grass and low scrub. Captain Verner went ahead to reconnoitre, and the Column toiled on up the ridge. Then, at last, upon reaching the top at about 7 o'clock, we beheld the wide valley, and the Nile flowing between broad belts of green, and on the left, the roofs of a chain of villages, and the walled town of Metemmeh. Beyond, upon the farther bank, clustered the huts of the village of Shendi. But we had not yet come to the river. And moving out from Metemmeh were crowds of the enemy, moving out to cut us off from the blessed water. Once more, the whole air was throbbed with the boding war-drums.

Sir Herbert Stewart determined to give the men breakfast and then to attack. As usual, a zeriba must first be constructed and the force put in laager. The Column was halted upon the top of the rising ground, in a space some 300 yards square, surrounded by a sea of thin scrub, in which the enemy could find cover. A parapet, square in plan, and about two feet six inches high, was constructed of saddles and biscuit boxes and anything else which would serve the purpose. The camels were pushed inside it, and knee-lashed, and in the centre was placed the hospital. During the progress of the work the enemy, concealed in the scrub, crept nearer and opened fire.

The men breakfasted in a rain of bullets. So wearied were they, that some fell asleep over their food, bullets singing all about them. Many of the men got no food at all. I saw two men shot while they slept. One Dervish in particular sniped the Naval Brigade all breakfast-time. I subsequently discovered him in the bush, lying dead, a bullet through his head, in a litter of about 200 spent cartridges. One of my men was shot, and a spoke was knocked out of the wheel of the Gardner gun. A soldier was shot through

the stomach, and was carried screaming to the doctors, who gave him laudanum.

The situation was far from encouraging. During the night—the third without sleep—the men had marched for 14 hours, covering 19 miles, and losing some hundred camels. We were still four miles from the river, and between the river and our exhausted force were thousands of raging Dervishes. We were caught in a trap.

Seventy yards from our left flank was a little hill. In order to prevent its capture by the enemy, 30 Guardsmen were told off to occupy it. Volunteers carried saddles and boxes across the bullet-swept space and built a small breastwork with them. Several men were knocked over. In the meantime a company was extended along the ridge some 50 yards beyond the zeriba to check the enemy's fire; but they had nothing at which to aim except the puffs of smoke rising above the scrub. The Naval Brigade had no better luck with the Gardner gun, placed outside the zeriba near the left angle of the front.

At some time between 9 and 10 o'clock Sir Herbert Stewart was hit in the groin and severely wounded. The knowledge of this disaster was concealed from the men as long as possible. Then followed a terrible interval, which lasted for hours. Under that pitiless fire, exposed to an invisible enemy, men and camels were being hit every minute. All this time the heat was intense. There we lay in the blazing sun, helpless, the rattle of rifles all around us, the thin high note of the bullets singing overheard, or ending with a thud close at hand; men crying out suddenly, or groaning; camels lying motionless and silent, blood trickling from their wounds; and no one seemed to know what we were going to do. Of all things, the most trying to a soldier is to lie still under fire without being able to reply. It is true that there was volley firing in reply to the enemy, but they were invisible.

The command had naturally devolved upon Colonel Sir Charles Wilson, R.E., head of the Intelligence Department.

It was clear to me that unless we marched against the enemy at once, we were done. I dispatched a written message to Sir Charles Wilson. The messenger was killed. I sent a second message by Sub-Lieutenant E. L. Munro, R.N., who was struck by a bullet which wounded him in seven places.

Shortly afterwards I received a message from Sir Charles Wilson informing me that he was about to march against the enemy. I was ordered to remain in command of the zeriba, with Colonel Barrow.

Before forming square, Sir Charles Wilson ordered the breastwork surrounding the hospital and that defending the little knoll occupied by the Guards in our rear, to be strengthened into redoubts, in case of attack. The ammunition boxes must be shifted from the inside of the main zeriba, and carried across and among the baggage and the packed and helpless camels, a slow, laborious and dangerous business performed under fire. Men and officers worked with a will; yet it was 2 o'clock in the afternoon before they had done. Just then St. Leger Herbert, private secretary to Sir Herbert Stewart and correspondent of *The Morning Post*, was shot through the head.

The square was composed of half the Heavy Camel Regiment, Guards, Mounted Infantry, Royal Sussex, Royal Engineers, and some dismounted Hussars. Sir Charles Wilson placed it under the executive command of Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. E. E. Boscawen. The square was formed up in rear of the zeriba at 2.30 and marched at 3 o'clock. The men were cool, alert, and perfectly determined. The British soldier had shut his mouth. He was going to get to the river, enemy or no enemy, or die. By this time the enemy were plainly visible in full force in front, horse and foot gathering behind a line of green and white banners. The moment the square moved beyond the redoubt, it received a heavy fire. Several men were hit, and were carried back to the zeriba by our men, while the square moved forward at quick march. It made a zig-zag course in order to take

advantage of the clear patches of ground among the scrub; lying down and firing, and again advancing.

The Naval Brigade mounted the Gardner gun in the angle of the redoubt, and, together with the Royal Artillery and two of their screw-guns under Captain Norton, maintained a steady fire at the three distinct masses of the enemy. Two of these were hovering in front of the advancing square, upon the landward slope of the hill rising between us and the river; the third threatened the zeriba. In all of these we dropped shells, paying particular attention to the body menacing the zeriba. When the shells burst in their midst, the dervishes scattered like a flock of starlings.

In the zeriba were the most of the Hussars, whose horses were worn out, the Royal Artillery, half the Heavy Camel Regiment, half the Royal Engineers, what was left of the Naval Brigade, and the wounded in the hospital. Some 2000 camels were knee-lashed outside and all round the larger zeriba, forming a valuable breastwork.

All we could do was to work our guns. As the square went on, the enemy, moving in large masses, shifted their position, and as they moved, we dropped shells among them. We judged their numbers to be greater than at Abu Klea. Would the square of only 900 men ever get through? If ever a little British army looked like walking to certain death, it was that thin square of infantry.

Presently it disappeared from view. Soon afterwards we heard the steady roll of volley firing, and we knew that the enemy were charging the square. Then, silence. Whether the enemy had been driven back, or the square annihilated, we did not know. What we did know was that if the square had been defeated, the zeriba would very soon be attacked in overwhelming force. But as the moments passed the strain of suspense slackened; for, as the fire of the enemy directed upon the zeriba diminished and soon ceased altogether, the presumption was that the square had been victorious and had got through to the river.

What had happened was that the Arabs, charging down-

hill at the left front angle of the square, had been met by concentrated rifle fire, our men aiming low at a range of 400 yards, steady as on parade. Once more the British soldier proved that no troops in the world can face his musketry. The front ranks of the charging thousands were lying dead in heaps; the rear ranks fled over the hills; and the square went on, unmolested, very slowly, because the men were tired out, and so came to the river.

Count Gleichen, who marched with the square, recounting his experiences (in his *With the Camel Corps up the Nile*), writes: "Soon in the growing dusk a silver streak was visible here and there in amongst the green belt, but it was still a couple of miles off. . . . Our pace could not exceed a slow march. The sun went down, and the twilight became almost darkness; . . . a two-days-old crescent was shining in the sky, and its feeble light guided us through the gravel hills right to the brink of the Nile. The men were as wild with joy as their exhausted condition would allow. The wounded were held up for one look at the gleaming river, and then hurried to the banks. Still, perfect discipline was observed. Not a man left his place in the ranks until his company was marched up to take its fill. . . . A chain of sentries was established on the slopes overlooking the square, and in two minutes the force was fast asleep." Sir Charles Wilson (*From Korti to Khartoum*) adds: "The men were so exhausted that when they came up from their drink at the river they fell down like logs. . . ."

They had been marching and fighting for four days and three nights without sleep, and with very little food and water, and had lost a tenth of their number. That night we in the zeriba also slept. I remember very little about it, except that Lieutenant Charles Crutchley, Adjutant of the Guards' Camel Regiment, woke me twice and asked me for water. He made no complaint of any kind, and I did not know that he had been hit early in the day and that he had a bullet in his leg. General Crutchley, who was so kind as to

write to me in reply to my request that he would tell me what he remembers of the affair, says: "I remember lying on a stretcher that night, and people knocking against my leg, and that my revolver was stolen, I believe by one of the camel boys." Crutchley was carried down to the river by my bluejackets next day, and was taken into hospital. As I remember the occasion, he left the decision as to whether or not his leg should be amputated, to me. At any rate, the surgeon had no doubt as to the necessity of the operation, at which I was present. With his finger he flicked out of the wound pieces of bone like splinters of bamboo. The leg was buried, and was afterwards exhumed in order to extract the bullet from it. I think I remember that Crutchley, seeing it being carried across to the hospital, asked whose leg it was. He was carried upon a litter back to Korti, and the shaking of that terrible march made necessary a second operation, which was successful.

Sir Charles Wilson's force, having bivouacked that night beside the Nile, were up at daybreak; took possession of the empty village of mud huts, called Abu Kru, but always known as Gubat, which stood on the gravel ridge sloping to the Nile, 780 yards from the river; and placed the wounded in Gubat under a guard. The force then returned to our zeriba.

When we saw that gallant little array come marching over the distant hill-top, and through the scrub towards us, we cheered again and again. Hearty were our greetings. Our comrades, who had marched without breakfast, were speedily provided with a plentiful meal of bully-beef and tea.

Then we all set to work to dismantle the zeriba, to collect the stores of which it was constructed and to sort them out, to mend the broken saddles, and load up the wretched camels, who had been knee-lashed and unable to move for twenty-four hours. About a hundred camels were dead, having been shot as they lay. As there were not enough camels to carry all the stores, a part of these were

left under an increased garrison inside the redoubt upon the knoll in rear of the zeriba, Major T. Davison in command.

At midday we buried the dead, over whom I read the service, Sir Charles Wilson being present as chief mourner.

The last of the wounded to be moved was Sir Herbert Stewart, so that he should be spared as much discomfort as possible. He was doing fairly well, and we then hoped that he would recover.

Before sunset we were all safely lodged in Gubat. The Desert Column had reached the river at last. It was the 20th January; we had left Korti on the 8th. In the course of that 176 miles we had gone through perhaps as sharp a trial as British troops have endured.

At the fight of Abu Klea, nine officers and 65 non-commissioned officers and men were killed, and nine officers and 85 non-commissioned officers and men were wounded. On the 19th January, between the wells of Abu Klea and the river, one officer and 22 non-commissioned officers and men were killed, and eight officers and 90 non-commissioned officers and men were wounded. The general, Sir Herbert Stewart, had received a wound which was to prove mortal. All the officers of the Naval Brigade, except Mr. James Webber, boatswain, and Sub-Lieutenant Munro, who was wounded, and myself, had been killed. The losses were roughly one-tenth of the total number of the Column. The camels which survived had been on one-third rations and without water for a week. They were hardly able to walk; ulcerating sores pitted their bodies; their ribs actually came through their skin. Count Gleichen says that his camel drank from the Nile for 14 minutes without stopping; and that subsequently the poor beast's ribs took a fine polish from the rubbing of the saddle. The horses of the Hussars had been 58 hours, and many of them 72 hours, without water. I cannot mention the Hussars without paying a tribute to the admirable scouting work they did under Lieutenant-Colonel Barrow during the whole march, up to the time the last zeriba was formed, when the gallant little horses were dead beat.

The present field-marshal, Sir John French, did splendid service with the Hussars throughout the campaign.

When we came into Gubat I was painfully, though not seriously, ill. The galling of the makeshift saddle during my three days' ride across the desert from Dal to Abu Fatmeh on my way to Korti, had developed into a horrid carbuncle; and I was unable to walk without help.

## CHAPTER XXX

## THE SOUDAN WAR (*Continued*)

### VIII. DISASTER

"Comrades, who with us side by side,
Did in the brunt of battle stand,
Are absent now, their manly forms
Lie mouldering in the desert sand."
*Songs of the Camel Corps* (Sergeant H. EAGLE, R.M.C.C.)

ON 21st January, the day after the main body of the Desert Column had come to Gubat, an attack was made upon Metemmeh, which resolved itself into a reconnaissance in force. Lord Wolseley's instructions to Sir Herbert Stewart were "to advance on Metemmeh, which you will attack and occupy." These instructions Sir Charles Wilson, upon whom the command had devolved, determined to carry into execution, although there was a doubt whether under the circumstances the attempt would be justified. Metemmeh was a walled town of considerable strength, lying two miles down the river from the encampment. Between the encampment and the town rose low ridges, in whose folds clustered the huts of deserted villages.

The Naval Brigade joined in the attack; and as I was out of action, Mr. Webber, boatswain, was in command, and did admirably well.

While Sir Charles Wilson's force was firing upon the town, whence the enemy briskly replied, Gordon's four steamers arrived. His black troops instantly landed with guns, and joyfully bombarded the mud walls; while Sir

Charles Wilson conferred with Khashm-el-Mus Bey, Malik (King) of the Shagiyeh tribe, and Abd-el-Hamid Bey, a young Arab greatly trusted by Gordon, who were in command of the steamers. Abd el Hamid subsequently deserted, and was, I think, shot by the Mahdi. Khashm-el-Mus having reported that a large force was on its way down from Khartoum under Feki Mustapha, Sir Charles Wilson decided that he ought not to incur the further loss of men involved in the capture of Metemmeh. He therefore withdrew from Metemmeh, and returned to Gubat, destroying the three intervening villages on the way.

During the reconnaissance of Metemmeh, Major William H. Poë, of the Royal Marines, was severely wounded in the leg. He insisted upon wearing a red coat, saying that his other coat was not fit to be seen; and he made a conspicuous target. His leg was amputated, and he eventually recovered; and he rides to hounds to this day.

In view of the approach of the enemy, the wounded were brought from the fort on the ridge to an entrenched camp on the river; and opposite to it, upon Gubat Island, a breastwork was constructed, and was occupied by some of Gordon's Soudanese who had come in the steamers. Major T. Davison's outlying detachment, with the remaining stores, was brought in.

It was now necessary very carefully to consider the situation. Sir Charles Wilson read the letters dispatched by Gordon and brought in one of the steamers, the *Bordein*, which had left Khartoum on 14th December. Sir Charles gave me these letters to read. In a letter addressed to the Officer Commanding H.M. Troops, Gordon requested that "all Egyptian officers and soldiers" be taken out of the steamer. "I make you a present of these *hens*," he wrote, "and I request you will not let one come back here to me." In another letter, addressed to Major Watson (colonel in the Egyptian Army), dated 14th December, Gordon wrote that he expected a crisis to arrive about Christmas; and implied that he had abandoned hope of relief.

It was now nearly a month after Christmas, and Khartoum was still holding out. But it was no longer possible to carry into execution Lord Wolseley's original intention: that Sir Herbert Stewart should capture and occupy Metemmeh; that I should man Gordon's four steamers with the Naval Brigade and should take Sir Charles Wilson with a detachment of infantry up to Khartoum. Now, Sir Herbert Stewart was incapacitated by his wound; it was not considered practicable to take Metemmeh; all the officers of the Naval Brigade were killed or wounded except Mr. Webber; and I myself was so ill as to be unable to get about without help. Moreover, the weakened Desert Column, including more than a hundred wounded, would in all likelihood shortly be attacked by a greatly superior force.

Two main provisions of the original plan, however, had been fulfilled. The Column had reached the river; and Gordon's steamers had joined the Column. And it was then supposed that Wolseley was marching across the Bayuda Desert with reinforcements.

Sir Charles Wilson determined to go to Khartoum (a decision in which I strongly supported him), provided that he could make reasonably sure that the force to be left behind was not in immediate danger of attack. He reckoned that the news of the defeat of the Mahdi's forces at Abu Klea would have served both to inspirit the garrison at Khartoum, and, owing to the dispatch of a number of the enemy to meet us, to relieve them in some measure. And after examining the commanders of the steamers on the point, he was satisfied that the delay of two days spent in reconnoitring, would not be material; a conclusion which was not shared by Khashm-el-Mus, who was eager to go to Khartoum.

Accordingly, on 22nd January, Sir Charles Wilson took three steamers down stream to reconnoitre. The four boats sent down by Gordon were: the *Bordein*, under Abd-el-Hamid; *Talahawiyeh*, under Nusri Pasha; *Safieh*, under Mahmoud Bey; and *Tewfikiyeh*, under Khashm-el-Mus.

Sir Herbert Stewart was moved on board the *Tewfikiyeh*, a small boat, which was employed as a ferry between Gubat Island and the mainland. I went with Sir Charles Wilson in the *Talahawiyeh*. I was not of much use, as I had to be helped on board, and was obliged to lie down in the cabin. In the same steamer were Major Phipps and two companies of Mounted Infantry. Old Khashm-el-Mus was made commandant of the boat instead of Nusri Pasha. In the *Bordein* were Captain Verner, Abd-el-Hamid, and native soldiers. The *Safieh* had her own crew and captain.

These vessels, about the size and build of the old penny steamboats on the Thames, had been ingeniously protected and armed by poor Colonel Stewart, he who was treacherously murdered on 18th September, 1884, after the wreck of his steamer *Abbas* at Hebbeh. (It will be remembered that Colonel Stewart was sent by Gordon, with a party of refugees, to communicate in person with the authorities in Egypt.) In the bows was a small turret constructed of baulks of timber, and containing a 9-pr. brass howitzer (*canon rayé*) to fire ahead; amidships, between the paddle-boxes, was the central turret, also built of timber, and mounting a gun to fire over the paddle-boxes. Astern, on the roof of the deckhouse, was an enclosure of boiler-plate, protecting the wheel and giving shelter to riflemen. The sides and bulwarks were covered with boiler-plate, above which was fixed a rail of thick timber, leaving a space through which to fire. The boiler, which projected above the deck, was jacketed with logs of wood. The improvised armour of wood and iron would stop a bullet, but was pervious by shell.

The ships' companies were an interesting example of river piracy. The steamers had been cruising up and down the Nile since October, a period of four months, during which the crews lived on the country, raiding and fighting. Everything was filthy and neglected except the engines. The forehold was crammed with ammunition, *dhura*

grain, wool, fuel, and miscellaneous loot. The main-hold was inhabited by women, babies, stowaways, wounded men, goats, amid a confusion of ammunition, sacks of grain, wood fuel, bedding and loot. The after-hold held the possessions, including loot, of the commandant. Below the forward turret slave-girls ceased not from cooking *dhura*-cakes. Rats swarmed everywhere; the whole ship exhaled a most appalling stench; and the ship's company shouted and screamed all day long.

First there was the commandant, who was theoretically in chief command of the ship, and who commanded the soldiers on shore; then there was the officer commanding the regular soldiers, Soudanese. He was black, and so were his men, who were freed slaves. The officer commanding the Artillery was an Egyptian. The Bashi-Bazouk contingent was composed of Shagiyehs—who were of the tribe ruled by Khashm-el-Mus—of black slaves, and of half-castes. Their officers were Turks, Kurds, and Circassians. The captain of the ship was a Dongolese, and his sailors were blacks. Under the captain were numerous petty officers, such as the chief of the sailors, the chief of the carpenters, and so forth. The chief engineer and his staff were Egyptians. The Reis (pilot) and his assistants were Dongolese.

Into this wild medley, in the *Talahawiyeh*, Sir Charles Wilson brought a company of Mounted Infantry; and thus reinforced, we steamed down river; while I lay in the cabin, in a good deal of pain, and chatted to Khashm-el-Mus, who became a great friend of mine. He was a short, grey-bearded, dignified man of middle age, owning great power over his own people. He remained loyal to Gordon under very trying conditions, and he stuck by us to the last.

Near Shendi, one of Khashm-el-Mus's men came on board and reported that the force advancing from Berber had met the fugitives from Abu Klea and had come no farther. Another Shagiyeh gave the same information. The people of Shendi fired on the steamers, which replied

with ten rounds of shell from each gun. We then wen about and returned to Gubat. At my request, Sir Charle Wilson conferred upon Mr. Ingram, of *The Illustrate London News*, the rank of acting-lieutenant in the Roya Navy. Ingram had been of the greatest service. He ha brought his own launch up from Korti, volunteered to th Desert Column, and fought gallantly at Abu Klea and at th reconnaissance of Metemmeh. As all the naval officers ha been killed or wounded, and I was comparatively helpless I was delighted to secure Mr. Ingram, who was exceedingl useful.

His subsequent history was remarkable. He was kille while hunting big game in Africa, and was buried upon a island, which was afterwards washed away. The stor goes that the manner of his death and the bearing away b a flood of his remains, were the fulfilment of a curse, whic fell upon him when, in spite of warnings, he purchased certain Egyptian mummy.

Sir Charles Wilson, being assured that no attack wa intended from the direction of Berber, began immediatel to prepare for his expedition to Khartoum. Most un fortunately, I was compelled to retire into hospital; but was able to issue instructions which I hope were of use. A Sir Charles Wilson's request, I advised him to take th two larger and better protected steamers, *Bordein* an *Talahawiyeh*.

The work of preparing them began next morning 23rd January. The first thing to be done was to sort ou from their crews the Egyptians, Turks, Kurds, Circassians the "hens" whom Gordon had refused to have again in Khartoum, and to man the two vessels with Soudanese sailors and soldiers. Captain Gascoigne and Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley toiled at this tiresome job nearly all day.

At my suggestion, the people removed from the steamers were placed in a camp by themselves up stream on the Khartoum side of Gubat; so that in the event of a force advancing from Khartoum, and the consequent revolt

of the "hens," we should not be placed between two fires. The military objection was that they would foul the water; which was obviated by my building wooden piers projecting into the stream.

An engine-room artificer from the Naval Brigade was sent on board each steamer, in which they went to work to repair defects. Wood for the steamers was obained by cutting up the *sakiehs*, or water-wheels, up and down the river, a slow process as performed by natives receiving orders through interpreters. Khashm-el-Mus was placed in command of the *Bordein*, and Abd-el-Hamid of the *Talahawiyeh*. Sir Charles Wilson was to go in the *Bordein*, together with Captain Gascoigne, 10 non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Sussex, one petty officer and one artificer Naval Brigade, and 110 Soudanese soldiers. In the *Talahawiyeh* were Captain L. J. Trafford, in command of 10 non-commissioned officers and men of the Royal Sussex, one of whom was a signaller, one engine-room artificer Naval Brigade, and some 80 Soudanese soldiers. The *Talahawiyeh* towed a *nuggar* carrying about 50 Soudanese soldiers and a cargo of grain for Khartoum. According to Gordon's express desire, the British troops were clad in red tunics, which, being borrowed from the Guards and the Heavy Camel Regiment, were far from being a regimental fit.

By the time the preparations were complete, it was too late to start that night, and the Royal Sussex, folded in their red tunics, bivouacked on the bank.

During the day, the entrenchments upon the hillside and by the river were strengthened; and the same evening a convoy and an escort under the command of Colonel Talbot started for Jakdul to fetch stores. Captain C. B. Piggot, the man who knew not fear, carrying dispatches to Korti, accompanied them.

It should be borne in mind that the chief object of the expedition to Khartoum, apart from the necessity of communicating with Gordon himself, was to produce a moral

effect upon the Mahdists; Gordon's idea being that the presence of a small force of British soldiers would inevitably convince the native that powerful reinforcements might be expected immediately. In the journal of Sir Charles Wilson (*From Korti to Khartoum*) he makes the following comment:

"The original plan was for Beresford to man two of the steamers with the Naval Brigade, mount his Gardner gun on one of them, and after overhauling them, take me to Khartoum with about fifty men of the Sussex Regiment. This was now impossible: all the naval officers were killed or wounded except Beresford, who was himself unable to walk, and many of the best petty officers and seamen were also gone. Beresford offered to accompany me; but he had done himself no good by going down the river the day before, and there was every prospect of his getting worse before he was better. Besides, I felt I could not deprive the force of its only naval officer, when it was quite possible the steamers left behind might have to take part in a fight."

That possibility was fulfilled. In the event, if I may say so, it was lucky that I was there.

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 24th January, the two steamers started, flying the Egyptian flag, the slave-girls frying *dhura*-cake under the fore turret, old Khashm-el-Mus smoking and drinking coffee on the cabin sofa, both vessels crammed with yelling and joyous savages, among whom were a bare score of British soldiers. They must pass powerful batteries, a single shot from which would sink them, and dangerous cataracts sown with rocks, and finally the guns of Omdurman, which was now in possession of the enemy. And having survived these perils, they might be unable to return, for the river was rapidly falling. Slowly they steamed away against the strong stream, and vanished; and for seven days we waited for news of that desperate enterprise.

In Sir Charles Wilson's absence, the military command devolved upon Colonel Boscawen, and after a few days, Colonel Boscawen being ill with fever, upon Colonel Mildmay Willson of the Scots Guards. The actual senior officer was myself. I issued a proclamation to the natives.

(*Translation*)

"To the people of the river districts.

"This is to make it known to you that we are the advanced portion of the two great English armies which are now marching on Khartoum to punish the rebels.

"We do not wish to do you any harm if you will come to see us. You will receive no hurt; and we will pay you for your cattle and crops.

"If, however, you do not tender your submission, we will punish you severely. Your cattle will be taken, your villages and *sakiehs* burnt, and you yourselves will be killed, even as those unfortunates who ventured to oppose us at Abu Klea and Metemmeh.

"Any person desirous of speaking with the English general should carry a white flag, and come by the river bank alone. He will not be detained, and he will be guarded from all danger.

"The SIRDAR
"Advanced Guard, English Army"

I was in hospital for only two days. The surgeon's knife relieved my pain, and I was speedily healed. On the 26th January, and the following day, I took the *Safieh* down to Metemmeh and shelled that place, covering the advance of a foraging party. There were daily expeditions both by the river in the steamer, and by land, to get goats and cattle, vegetables for the sick, and green-stuff for the camels, which had already eaten up all the vegetation about the camp. We weighed anchor daily at 6 a.m., taking a party of twenty picked shots from one of the regiments. Small

parties of riflemen used to fire at us from the left bank, but we had no casualties.

All the villages in the neighbourhood were deserted; but there was nothing to be taken from them except a few beans and lentils, and the native wooden bedsteads. A good deal of long-range sniping went on, but no one was the worse for it.

The British sailors and soldiers had trouble with the native bulls, which, docile enough with natives, resisted capture by white men. Nusri Pasha, the Egyptian, who had come down in command of the *Talahawiyeh*, was standing on the deck of the *Safieh*, watching my men trying to compel a recalcitrant bull down the bank.

"Let me try," said Nusri Pasha. "He'll obey me. You see."

And he crossed the plank to the shore, and went up to the angry bull. No sooner did the Pasha lay hand on the rope, than the bull charged, caught the unhappy Egyptian between his horns, carried him headlong down the slope and into the water, and fetched up against the steamer with his horns fixed in the sponson, while Nusri disappeared into the river, the beholders yelling with laughter. The Pasha was fished out, chastened but not much the worse for his extraordinary escape. Had he been impaled upon the horns, there would have been no more Nusri, tamer of bulls.

Every night the tom-toms beat in Metemmeh; and on the 28th, there was a great noise of firing, which we supposed to be the celebration of a religious festival. Alas, it was something else.

On 31st January, Colonel Talbot returned from Jakdul with a large convoy of supplies. He was accompanied by the second division of the Naval Brigade, which, it may be remembered, had not arrived at Korti when the Desert Column left that place. With the Naval Brigade came Lieutenant E. B. van Koughnet, in command, Sub-Lieutenant Colin R. Keppel (son of my old friend Sir Harry

Keppel), Surgeon Arthur William May (now Surgeon-General Sir A. W. May, C.B.), and Chief Engineer Henry Benbow (now Sir Henry Benbow, K.C.B., D.S.O.). Never was reinforcement more timely; and it was with inexpressible pleasure that I greeted my shipmates. Once more I had officers; in the meantime, I had put the *Safieh* into fighting trim; and now we were ready for emergency. It came.

Every night I used to haul off the *Safieh* into the stream; and I slept on deck. Very early in the morning of the 1st February, I was awakened by a voice hailing the *Safieh*. I ran to the rail, and there, in the first light of the dawn, was a boat, and Stuart-Wortley's face was lifted to mine. He climbed aboard.

"Gordon is killed and Khartoum has fallen," he said.

Then Stuart-Wortley told me how Sir Charles Wilson's two steamers were wrecked, how his force was isolated up the river, and how the Mahdi might be marching down with his whole triumphant horde armed with all the guns and rifles of the fallen city.

"Then the soldiers had better run up more wire entanglements and earthworks as quick as they can. And I wish to God I had those two steamers!" I said.

I told Stuart-Wortley I would at once proceed to the rescue of Sir Charles Wilson's party, and sent him on shore to tell the news to Colonel Boscawen.

How the tidings came to the camp, is related by Lieutenant Douglas Dawson, who recorded in his diary how one "drew his curtains in the dead of night and told him" . . . (The diary was published in *The Nineteenth Century* for November, 1885. I quote from the copy kindly lent to me by the author):

"*February 1st.* No member of our small force as long as he lives will ever forget this morning. Just at dawn I was woke by someone outside our hut calling for Boscawen. I jumped up and went out to see who it was, and then made

out to my surprise Stuart-Wortley, whom we all thought at Khartoum.

"I looked towards the river, expecting in the faint light to see the steamers, then seeing nothing, and observing by his face that there was something wrong, I said, 'Why, good heavens! where are the steamers, what is the news?' He said, 'The very worst.'"

The full story of a very gallant exploit, Sir Charles Wilson's daring voyage to Khartoum, has been modestly and clearly told in his book, *From Korti to Khartoum*. The *Bordein* and the *Talahawiyeh* towing the *nuggar*, came to the Shabloka Cataract upon the day (25th January) after they had started. Here the *Bordein* stuck; and having been got off after many hours' work, she ran aground again off Hassan Island next day, during which the expedition advanced only three miles. On the afternoon of the 27th, a man appearing on the left bank cried that Khartoum had fallen and Gordon was slain. No one believed him, because the air was full of false rumours. The next day, 28th, in the morning, a man on the right bank cried that Khartoum had fallen and that Gordon had been killed, two days before. No one believed him. But it was true. It was on that night that we in Gubat heard the guns firing in Metemmeh.

By this time, those in the steamers could catch a far glimpse of the roofs and minarets of Khartoum pencilled upon the blue above the trees of Tuti Island; and at the same time, a heavy fire was opened from the battery of Fighiaiha on their right hand. Then they came to Halfiyeh, where a battery of four guns fired upon them, on their left hand. The naked black men in the steamers served their guns with a furious zeal, while the British infantry fired steadily, and so through the smoke the red flags went on, safely past the point of the long island that ends opposite to Halfiyeh, the Soudanese ecstatically shrieking defiance and brandishing their rifles. At Halfiyeh were boats lying, and Khashm-el-Mus said to Sir Charles Wilson, "Gordon's troops must be there, as the Mahdi has no boats."

Then, from the *Bordein*, which was leading, they could see Government House in Khartoum plain above the trees, but there was no flag flying from its roof. As they passed between the island on their left hand and the mainland on the right, two more guns opened, and there began a heavy rifle-fire from both sides which continued for the rest of the way. Tuti Island, the upper end of which faces Khartoum, and about which on either side the Blue Nile stretches an arm to join the White Nile, was lined with riflemen firing over a dyke. At first Sir Charles thought them to be Gordon's men, and took the steamer nearer in, when the fire increased. So, writes Sir Charles, "we went on, old Khashm protesting it was all up, and predicting terrible disaster to ourselves. No sooner did we start upwards than we got into such a fire as I hope never to pass through again in a 'penny steamer.' Two or more guns opened upon us from Omdurman fort, and three or four from Khartoum or the upper end of Tuti; the roll of musketry from each side was continuous; and high above that could be heard the grunting of a Nordenfelt or a mitrailleuse, and the loud rushing noise of the Krupp shells . . ."

They rounded the curve of the island, and there beyond the space of rushing water torn with shot, and the flash and smoke of bursting shells, Khartoum rose into full sight; and there, ranged on the sandy shore beneath the walls, the Mahdi's banners fluttered above the massed ranks of the dervishes.

All was done. Sir Charles Wilson had fought his way to the end, determined to go on till he was certain of the fate of the city. Then he knew; then, and not until then, did he give the order to go about.

At the word, as he relates, the Soudanese, who had lost all they had in the world, were stricken mute and impotent. Poor old Khashm-el-Mus wrapped his mantle about his head, crouching in a corner. They ran down stream through the fire, the Soudanese bravely returning it, the British infantry steady as ever, and won clear. During four hours they had

been under fire. They ran down some 30 miles, and moored for the night.

The next day, 29th January, the *Talahawiyeh* struck on a rock in the Shabloka Cataract, and must be abandoned. The British were transhipped to the *Bordein*, the natives bivouacked on an island. Next day the natives were sent on ahead in the *nuggar*, hitherto towed by the *Talahawiyeh*, and the *Bordein* followed. The day after, 31st January, during the afternoon, the *Bordein* struck a rock, began to fill, and was run on shore upon a small island close to the large Mernat Island. When the accident occurred, Sir Charles Wilson was just preparing to run at full speed past the fort and battery of Wad Habeshi, which lay on the left hand some three and a half miles lower down. Mernat Island lies about 35 miles above Gubat by land, and nearly 40 by river.

Sir Charles Wilson landed guns, ammunition and stores. At first he intended to make a night march down on the right bank; but he changed his plan and decided to remain where he was for the night.

Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley was dispatched to carry the news to Gubat in one of the two small boats, a felucca. He left at 6.45 p.m., taking a crew of four English soldiers and eight natives. They were fired at and missed by the Wad Habeshi fort; and working splendidly, traversed the 40 miles in a little over eight hours, arriving at Gubat, as already related, at 3 a.m. on the morning of 1st February. Stuart-Wortley and his men faced death every mile of the way; and their voyage deserves to be remembered as a bold, determined and gallant achievement.

## CHAPTER XXXI

## THE SOUDAN WAR (*Continued*)

### IX. THE RESCUE

"And while lying near Metemmeh
He went—many a time you know—
Up the river in his steamer,
Dealing havoc on the foe;
And each gallant tar and Jollie
That was with him, fighting there,
Now would follow without question,
Let him lead them, anywhere."
*Songs of the Camel Corps* (Sergeant H. EAGLE, R.M.C.C.)

[The men used to sing 'Our Navy on the Nile,' of which the above is an excerpt; but the rest is so complimentary to the author, that he is obliged to omit it.]

AT two o'clock in the afternoon of the 1st February the *Safieh* left Gubat to proceed to the rescue of Sir Charles Wilson's force. From the time the news arrived until we started, we were occupied in getting wood and stores. With me were Lieutenant E. B. van Koughnet, Sub-Lieutenant Colin R. Keppel, Surgeon Arthur William May, Chief Engineer Henry Benbow, Acting-Lieutenant Walter Ingram, Mr. Webber, boatswain, all of the Royal Navy, Lieutenant R. L. Bower, King's Royal Rifle Corps, and Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley, who had brought the news of the disaster. The vessel was manned by picked men from both divisions of the Naval Brigade, and carried twenty non-commissioned officers and men, picked shots, of the Mounted Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant R. L.

Bower. The engine-room staff consisted of Chief Engineer Benbow; two engine-room artificers, Royal Navy, J. T. Garland and G. Woodman; and one chief stoker, Royal Navy; an Arab or Egyptian engineer, and six Soudanese stokers. We mounted the two Gardner guns in echelon on the platform made of railway sleepers and boiler-plate amidships, and one of the two brass 4-pr. mountain guns was placed in the turret forward, the other in the turret aft, both turrets being built of railway sleepers and boiler-plate, with which defences the ship had been cased above water. The Reis (native pilot) was stationed inside the barricade protecting the wheel, to guide the helmsman, who was a blue-jacket. The native boats always carry two Reises, one to look out, the other to steer. Our Reis was mounted upon a box so that he could see over the barricade. In order to guard against the kind of accident which had befallen Sir Charles Wilson's steamers, I informed him that if he took us safely up and down he would be rewarded, but that upon any indication of treachery he would be shot at once. He was then handcuffed to a stanchion, and Quartermaster Olden, with a loaded revolver, was placed at his side. Surgeon-General A. W. May, who very kindly sent me his recollections of the trip, writes: "A quartermaster with the nickname of 'Punch' was told off to look after him, and he stood as grim as death at his side, revolver in hand, quite ready at the slightest sign of treachery to carry out his orders . . . I always attribute our getting up and down when the river was low and dangerous to your wise warning of the pilot."

The *Safieh* was simply a penny steamer in a packing-case. Where the packing-case was deficient, bullets went through her as through paper, and a shell would pierce her wooden jacket. The pinch would come when we sighted the fort at Wad Habeshi, which lay on our right hand, between us and Mernat Island, where was Sir Charles Wilson's party, and which was some 36 miles up stream from Gubat.

On 1st February we shoved along at the rate of 2·5

miles an hour, the most the *Safieh* could do against the current, stopped to get wood, and anchored in the stream during the night. It was impossible to navigate in the dark. The next day was almost entirely occupied in collecting wood, which was laboriously obtained by dismantling and cutting up the *sakiehs*, native water-wheels. That evening we arrived within three or four miles of Wad Habeshi, and again anchored for the night. After weighing next morning, I assembled the ship's company and briefly addressed them. I told them that we were in a tight place, but that we would get out of it; that if we failed to rescue Sir Charles Wilson, the Mahdi's men would get them and would then come down upon Gubat; but that we would save Wilson's party. The men were as cheery and steady as possible.

At 7 a.m. we sighted Wad Habeshi on the starboard hand; and we saw, far up the river, the trees of Mernat Island, and the tilted hull and funnel of the stranded *Bordein*.

By 7.30 a.m. we were within 1200 yards of the fort, and I opened fire with the bow gun. Wad Habeshi was a strong earthwork, with four embrasures, mounting four guns, and manned, according to Stuart-Wortley's report, by 5000 riflemen. The only practicable channel ran within 80 yards of the fort. We could only crawl past the battery, and as we were defenceless against gun-fire, our only chance was to maintain so overwhelming a fire upon the embrasures as to demoralise the guns' crews. It was an extreme instance of the principle that the best defence resides in gun-fire rather than in armour; for we had no effective armour.

Accordingly, the starboard Gardner and the two brass guns, the 20 soldiers and 14 bluejackets, poured a steady and an accurate fire into the fort, disregarding the parties of riflemen who were shooting at us from the bank. There were some 600 or 800 of these, and one gun opened fire from the side embrasure of the fort. Poor von Koughnet was shot in the leg, and second-class petty officer Edwin Curnow, number two of the crew of the starboard Gardner, fell mortally wounded, and died that evening. But so

deadly was the fire we poured into the embrasures of the fort, that the enemy could not fire the two guns bearing upon the *Safieh* while she was bore abeam of them. We passed the fort, and by the time we had left it about 200 yards astern, our fire necessarily slackened, as our guns no longer bore upon the battery.

Suddenly a great cloud of steam or smoke rose from the after hatchway. Instantly the fire of the enemy increased. Chief Engineer Benbow, who was standing with me on the quarter-deck, ran to the engine-room. A Maltese carpenter rushed up to me crying, "All is lost, sare, myself and my brother, sare! The ship he sink, sare!" and was promptly kicked out of the way.

I saw the black stokers rushing up from the stoke-hold hatchway. At the moment it was uncertain whether the ship was on fire or the boiler injured; but as she still had way upon her I ordered her to be headed towards the bank, away from the fort, and so gained another few yards. The carpenter's mate reported that there were three feet of water in the well, and that the vessel was sinking.

Then she stopped. In the meantime our fire upon the side embrasure of the fort was continued by the riflemen; and it went on without pause, lest the enemy should get another shot in. I dropped anchor, and addressed the men. I told them that the vessel was all right, as she had only a foot of water under her bottom; that the stores and ammunition must be got up on deck in case she settled down; that no relief was possible; but that not a single dervish would come on board while one of us was alive.

The men were quite cool and jovial.

"It's all right, sir," said one cheerfully. "We'll make it 'ot for the beggars!"

Mr. Benbow, chief engineer, came to me and reported that the water must have come from the boiler, because it was hot; and that, as the shot which had pierced the boiler had entered above the water-line, the vessel was safe. I then

countermanded the order to bring up the ammunition and stores.

In the meantime the two engine-room artificers, Garland and Woodman, had been carried up from the engine-room, so terribly scalded that the flesh of their hands, forearms and faces was hanging in strips, like the flesh of a boiled chicken. They had been stationed by Mr. Benbow between the boiler and the ship's side, with orders to insert shot-plugs if the side was pierced; and in that position were farther from the exit than the Soudanese stokers, and therefore were more severely injured. The stokers were badly scalded. Two days afterwards, an odour as of the grave pervading the upper deck, a search discovered a black stoker under the fortified superstructure. He was hauled out with a boat-hook, and was then still alive, although his flesh was peeling from his bones. He had resigned himself to die, as Asiatics will; and he died.

Considering the situation, I thought that upon the *Safieh* probably depended not only the fate of Sir Charles Wilson's party, who were isolated in a hostile country between the strong force at Wad Habeshi and the Mahdi's host marching down from Khartoum, and who could not even rely upon the native soldiers with them, but the fate of the whole Desert Column; because if we failed to bring away Wilson, and his party were captured or slain, the enemy would be encouraged to descend upon the Desert Column at Gubat. I was, of course, at that moment ignorant of the movements of the Mahdi's army; and could only conjecture that they were even then marching upon us. As a matter of fact they were; but the exact sequence of events did not become known for a long time afterwards.

I asked Mr. Benbow if he could repair the boiler.

He replied, "I think I can do it."

He added that it was still too hot to examine. The time was then between nine and ten a.m. Mr. Benbow, assisted by the leading stoker R.N., who had been stationed on deck as stretcher-bearer, drew the fires and pumped out the boiler,

when he found a hole some three inches in diameter, round which the plate had bulged inwards, its edges being torn and jagged.

By the time the examination was completed, it was about eleven o'clock. Mr. Benbow then set to work to make a new plate with his own hands. He had brought with him from the depot at Wady Halfa some engineer's stores: a piece of sheet-iron, and some bolts and nuts; part of the equipment I had brought from Korti, when General Buller asked me if I was going to mend camels with them. I remembered his chaff in that hour.

Mr. Benbow, with no other assistance than that of the leading stoker, had to cut a plate, 16 inches by 14, drill the holes in it to receive the bolts, drill holes in the injured boiler plate corresponding to the first to a fraction, and cut the threads of the screws upon bolts and nuts. The new plate being too thin to take the pressure, he also had to bolt an iron bar across it, drilling the holes through the bar, through the new plate, and through the injured boiler plate.

During the whole time he was below in the stifling hot engine-room at work upon a task demanding at once great exertion and the utmost nicety, the fire from the fort never ceased. Bullets pattered continually upon the hull, some of them piercing it, and striking the wounded men who lay below. At any moment another shell might burst into the engine-room. But Mr. Benbow went on with his work.

On deck, we continued to maintain a steady fire, hour after hour, upon the fort. It was our only chance. The slightest cessation, and they would bring their gun to bear on us. The range was between 200 and 300 yards. As we hung at anchor, the fort bore almost directly astern. It was therefore necessary to alter the position of our guns. A rough platform was built aft, upon which one of the Gardners was mounted, and where it was admirably served all day by Acting-Lieutenant Walter Ingram. Lieutenant Colin Keppel, in order to have room inside the narrow wood-protected casemate astern to train his brass howitzer, sawed off its

trail. The result was that after each discharge the gun leaped into the air and fell upon its back. After laying the gun, and before firing, Keppel removed the sight to prevent its being injured, and put it in his pocket. Keppel and Mr. James Webber served the gun all day, firing 150 rounds. The casemate itself was strengthened to take the shock of the gun by buttressing it with a stout strut of timber. At every discharge the whole crazy vessel shook and trembled; her plates started; and her bows opened. The fire from the Gardner and the rifle-fire, directed upon the side embrasure of the fort, were so accurate and incessant that the gunners of the enemy never had a chance, either to get their gun to bear or to remove it to another position. The few shots they fired travelled about 100 yards to the right of the steamer.

Meantime, Mr. Benbow, down below, went on with his work.

The noise of the engagement was so deafening and continuous that we did not hear the three shots fired upon Mernat Island, the signal arranged by Sir Charles Wilson with Stuart-Wortley to show that the party was safe; and we were so busy that we did not see the flags hoisted upon the wreck of the *Bordein* with the same object. At that time Sir Charles Wilson's party were themselves engaged with the enemy, who were firing upon them from the bank. Sir Charles Wilson was able to make out that the *Safieh* was at anchor and was heavily engaged. He then thought that we had the two steamers, the *Tewfikiyeh* as well as the *Safieh*, that one had been injured, and that the *Safieh* was covering her from the fire of the fort. He immediately broke up his zeriba, embarked the wounded, some of the natives, the guns, ammunition and stores, and a small guard of the Royal Sussex, in the *nuggar*, and sent it down stream under the command of Captain Gascoigne. The embarkation was carried into execution under fire. Sir Charles then landed the rest of his force on the right bank (Wad Habeshi and the enemy were on the left bank) in his remaining small

boat, a felucca. The whole party then marched down the right bank to a point opposite to the *Safieh*, Captain Gascoigne taking down the *nuggar* and the felucca. "As we got nearer," writes Sir Charles, "we could make out the white ensign flying bravely in the breeze, a pleasant sight for hard-pressed Britishers."

Upon the arrival of his force, it immediately opened fire upon the fort. I signalled to Sir Charles, informing him of the condition of affairs, and suggesting that he should move to a place lower down, where I would pick him up on the morrow. The *Safieh* lying some 500 yards from the bank, and Sir Charles having a difficulty in replying to my signals, Captain Gascoigne volunteered to go aboard. He took a native crew in the felucca and pulled across under a hot fire from the fort, which did not discompose him in the least. There was never a cooler man under fire than Gascoigne. He brought with him the two engine-room artificers of the Naval Brigade who had accompanied Sir Charles Wilson, and who at once went below to help Mr. Benbow to repair the boiler.

Captain Gascoigne returned with a message from myself to Sir Charles Wilson suggesting that, in order to divert the attention of the enemy from the *Safieh*, he should continue to maintain a fire upon the fort with a part of his force, while the rest proceeded farther down to form a zeriba at a spot suitable for embarkation; and that the women, sick and wounded should proceed in the *nuggar* during the night to the same place, to which I would bring the steamer on the following morning. Captain Gascoigne rejoined Sir Charles Wilson without casualty.

Sir Charles then sent Captain Trafford forward with the Royal Sussex, Khashm-el-Mus and most of the Soudanese, while Sir Charles himself remained with 30 men and one gun. They maintained a steady and a useful fire until sunset, when they marched after the rest of the party.

Meantime, Mr. Benbow, down below, went on with his work.

It was about two o'clock when the artificers joined him, so that he had already been toiling single-handed, except for the leading stoker, for three hours. After another three hours, at five o'clock, the plate and bar were made, the holes drilled in them and in the boiler, and the threads cut upon the bolts and nuts. But the boiler was still so hot, that it was impossible for a man to be in it, and the plate could not be fixed, because it was necessary to pass the bolts through the plates from inside the boiler. Mr. Benbow pumped cold water into the boiler and out again once or twice; but by 6 o'clock the heat was still too great for a white man to endure. We smeared a negro boy with tallow, and I promised him a reward if he would go into the boiler. He was delighted. He was lowered down, to climb out again faster than he went in. After a short pause, he had another try. This time, in a frying heat that only a black skin could bear, he stayed inside, passing the bolts through, while Mr. Benbow caulked plates and bolts and screwed them home. The boy was none the worse in body and richer in possessions than ever in his life. By seven o'clock the job was done.

You can see what it was for yourself; for the plate is now in the Museum of the Royal Naval College, Greenwich. Rear-Admiral Sir Colin Keppel (sub-lieutenant in 1885), writing to me on the subject, says, "When in command of the gunboats under Lord Kitchener in 1898, on our way to Fashoda, about 300 miles above Khartoum on the White Nile, I again came upon our old *Safieh*, then again in the hands of the dervishes, with whom we had a short action. The first thing I did afterwards was to go down below (I knew where to look!) and found the patch which old Benbow had put on more than 13 years before."

Lord Kitchener afterwards had the plate cut out, and he very kindly sent it to me.

By ten o'clock that night, the boiler was repaired and the fires were laid. In the meantime, as soon as the twilight fell that evening, the fire from the fort slackened.

It was my object to delude the enemy into the belief that we had abandoned the steamer; for, if they thought she was empty, they would not fire upon her, lest they should damage an invaluable prize. Moreover, did the enemy suppose that we were staying by the ship, they would during the night shift a gun from the fort, dragging it along the bank to a point abreast of the steamer; whence they could see the vessel looming on the water, whereas we in the steamer could not see them; whence the range was no more than about 80 yards; and whence a single hit would disable us.

But all depended upon our running the gauntlet in the morning. Therefore, in the hope of deceiving the enemy, as the darkness gathered, the four boats brought down to embark Wilson's party were ostentatiously hauled alongside, as if to take off the ship's company. Then all firing stopped; and after that thirteen hours' furious fusillade, the immense and crystal silence of the desert submerged us like the sea. Talking above a whisper was forbidden; every aperture was closed below, where the lamps were burning to light Mr. Benbow at his work, and no spark of light was allowed on deck. The men lit their pipes at a slow match burning in a bucket, and smoked under cover.

After leaving the *Safieh* in the afternoon, Captain Gascoigne had more adventures with his *nuggar*, of which by this time he must have been weary. It went ashore opposite to the fort, which of course shot at it, and Gascoigne must embark all except the badly wounded, under fire as usual. Luckily, the enemy failed to get the range. By sunset, the united exertions of Sir Charles Wilson's firing party had refloated the *nuggar*.

Late that night, we saw her drift past us in the darkness.

The fort fired upon her, but apparently without result, for she drifted on and disappeared. Then the enemy opened fire again upon the steamer. They had run the guns outside the fort in the interval, and fired a few rounds at us, accompanied by a heavy rifle fire. But the *Safieh* remained dumb and motionless. The firing ceased, the

enemy evidently believing that we had abandoned the vessel.

I slept in snatches on deck, waking every now and then to look round. The officers were sound asleep, lying in a neat row on the deck. It occurred to me that, taking into consideration the position in which they lay relative to the gun on the bank, a single shot might kill them all. So I roused them up very quietly, and bade them dispose themselves in various places. I remember how they waked with a sleepy grin, each looking for a separate corner, dropping into it and falling asleep again.

So far, our ruse had succeeded. At five o'clock the next morning (4th February) Mr. Benbow lit the fires, using the utmost caution, keeping the ash-pit draught plates almost shut, in order to prevent sparks, which would instantly betray us, from flying up the funnel. On deck, we were in suspense, all staring at the shot-riddled funnel. It kept its secret for fifty minutes; then suddenly it belched a fountain of hot ashes. It was then within ten minutes of daylight. Almost at the same moment a great shouting broke out in the fort, and a convulsive beating of tom-toms. Then the guns and rifles began to speak again.

What had happened was that when the pressure-gauge indicated 10 lb. of steam, the Arab captain of the stokers suddenly appeared at the engine-room hatch, and spoke swiftly in Arabic to his men, who, before Mr. Benbow could interfere, flung open the draught plates.

It was a close-run business. In the next ten minutes the steam had run up to 20 lb. pressure. Instantly we weighed anchor. The moment the steamer began to move, such a yell of rage went up from the Dervishes in the fort, as I never heard before or since. Leaping and screaming on the bank, they took up handfuls of sand and flung them towards us. They had thought us fled, and the steamer theirs. And there we were, and there was the steamer moving away up river towards Khartoum; and the men of Wad Habeshi were naturally disappointed.

I took the *Safieh* about a quarter of a mile up stream, both to confuse the enemy and to enable me to turn outside the narrow channel, and at a comparatively safe distance. Then we went about, and ran down at full speed, again concentrating our fire upon the embrasures of the fort. Once more, as we came abreast of Wad Habeshi, we turned both Gardners and both howitzers upon the embrasures, in one of which we burst a shell; while the 20 soldiers and the 14 bluejackets maintained their steady rifle fire.

We were running now with the stream instead of against it, and our speed was the greater, and we stormed past the fort without a single casualty; and then, just as we thought we were clear, lo! there was Gascoigne's hapless *nuggar*, stuck and helpless some 400 yards below Wad Habeshi, and in full bearing of its side embrasure. As all depended upon the safe passage of the *Safieh*, I ran on until we were a mile from the fort and out of its range, and then dropped anchor.

I dispatched Keppel with six bluejackets in a small boat to the assistance of the *nuggar*. Rear-Admiral Sir Colin Keppel very kindly sent to me his account of the affair, based upon the notes made in his diary at the time. "The riflemen, having got rid of the steamer, concentrated their fire on the *nuggar*. However, the range was long and their fire was not very accurate. After we had anchored you dispatched me in a small boat with six bluejackets to the assistance of the *nuggar*. After attempting to pull up to her, we found that the stream was too strong, and so I decided, having obtained your approval by semaphore, to land on the right bank, track the boat up until well upstream of the *nuggar*, and thus reach her. I found the only thing to do was to lighten her; and while Gascoigne and I were throwing overboard sacks of *dhura* and other things, I was struck in the groin by a bullet which went through my breeches but did not penetrate the skin. It only raised a bruise which made me limp for a few days. There was a considerable number of wounded in the *nuggar*. When

"RUNNING THE GAUNTLET." THE ACTION OF THE "SAFIEH" AT WAD HABESHI, 14TH FEBRUARY, 1885

she was afloat again we drifted down. You got under way in the steamer and picked us up."

Such is Keppel's modest account of what was a very gallant piece of service on his part and on the part of Captain Gascoigne, who with their men were working in the *nuggar* under fire for three hours. Had they failed where they so brilliantly succeeded, the whole Column, as we learned afterwards, would have been jeopardised; for the steamer, returning to their assistance, would again have come within range of the fort.

The *nuggar* was taken in tow, and Captain Gascoigne's heroic struggles with that unlucky craft were thus ended for the time. A mile below us, Sir Charles Wilson was waiting for us with his whole detachment. They were all embarked, and by 5.45 p.m. we had safely arrived at Gubat.

That night I slept so profoundly that I do not know when I should have awakened, had not first one rat, and then another, walked over my face.

Mr. Benbow's skilled and intrepid service had saved the Column with a piece of boiler plate and a handful of bolts. He received the special compliments of Lord Wolseley, who presented him with his own silver cigarette case; and was promoted to the rank of chief inspector of machinery. He ought to have received the Victoria Cross; but owing to the fact that I did not then know that the decoration could be granted for a service of that nature, I did not, to my great regret, recommend him for the honour. Mr. James Webber was promoted to be chief boatswain; and in 1887, his services being once more exceptionally recommended, he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant.

Surgeon Arthur May's services were inestimable. Always cheery, indefatigable and zealous, when he was not attending to the wounded under fire, he was on deck, rifle in hand, among the marksmen. It was a great pleasure to me to report in the highest terms of the conduct of the officers and men under my command, and specially to recommend Lieutenant E. B. van Koughnet, Sub-Lieutenant C. R.

Keppel, Acting-Lieutenant Walter Ingram, Chief Engineer Benbow, Surgeon Arthur William May and Mr. James Webber, boatswain, and Lieutenant Bower, commanding the Mounted Infantry.

During the engagement with the fort at Wad Habeshi 5400 rounds were fired from the Gardner guns, and 2150 from the rifles. The figure for the brass howitzers is uncertain, the official report giving 126, but Sub-Lieutenant Keppel, who served one of the guns, mentioned 150 as the number fired from one gun in one day.

## CHAPTER XXXII

## THE SOUDAN WAR (*Continued*)

### X. The Effect of the Action of Wad Habeshi

THE proximate result of the fight of the *Safieh* was of course the fulfilment of its immediate object, the rescue of Sir Charles Wilson's gallant detachment. But, years afterwards, it was made known that the full effect actually extended so far as to include the salvation of the whole Desert Column. In *The Royal Navy: A History*, vol. vii., Sir William Laird Clowes briefly mentions the fact, referring to Sir F. R. Wingate's letter to Lord Wolseley of 18th March, 1893. The passages in that letter to which he refers are as follows:

". . . It is therefore on these grounds only that I have ventured to collate evidence on an episode which may be considered to have been finally dealt with. . . . Moreover, with the light which this evidence throws on the situation, the results of Beresford's action cannot but be enhanced . . . that he was the means of saving Sir C. Wilson and his party is an admitted fact; but when it is realised that added to this, his action really saved the Column, it is, I consider, my duty to bring before you this evidence which, had it been known at the time, might have secured for Beresford and Benbow the greatest reward soldiers and sailors can hope to obtain. But late as it is, it may not be too late for the question to be reopened. . . .

"In order to arrive at the actual details of the Dervish movements subsequent to the fall of Khartoum, a meeting

was held at the Intelligence Department, Egyptian Army, Cairo, on the 23rd February, 1893, at which the following were present, namely, Father Orhwalder, Kasha el Mus Pasha, Major Hassan Agha Mohammed (Kassala), Hassan Eff. Riban (late Maowin Berber District) and present at Berber at that time; the Emir Sheikh Medawi (one of the principal Dervish Emirs present in the attack on Khartoum). . . .

"In the unanimous opinion of the above Committee, the credit of having delayed the Dervish advance and thus enabling the British Column to be retired safely is due to the action of Lord Charles Beresford at Wad Habeshi. . . ."

The following short extracts may be cited from the evidence which led the Committee to their conclusion. The first is taken from the statement of Esh Sheikh Murabek Wad el Tilb, a Kordofan merchant who arrived in Cairo on 30th May, 1888, from Omdurman:

". . . There were 3000 Dervishes there (at Wad Habeshi) under the Emir Ahmed Wad Faid and Sheikh Mustafa el Amin. These Dervishes thought they could easily capture the steamer in which there were only about 30 men, but the English stood up and fought like men for many hours, they inflicted great loss on the Dervishes, and forced them to draw off and disperse. Their Chief Emir was killed as well as their Artillery Officer.

"The effect of this defeat on the Dervishes was immense, and it also affected the whole situation. The survivors fled in many directions, spreading the news of the English victory far and wide. . . .

"If the Dervishes at Wad Habeshi had succeeded in capturing the steamer, there is no doubt Nejumi would have hastened his march and would have intercepted the English before they could have got away from Gubat, but instead of that he halted when he heard of Wad Faid's death, and delayed some days in consequence at Wad Bishara and at Gereishab. He had a very large force with him . . .

"(Signed) MURABEK WAD EL TILB"

The second extract is translated from the German of Father Orhwalder, long a prisoner of the Mahdi:

". . . It is an undoubted fact that Lord Charles Beresford's gallant action at Wad Habeshi was the means of saving the lives of Sir Charles Wilson and his party, who would have suffered a like fate to that of Colonel Stewart and his companions, and it is an equally undoubted fact that the Mahdi's success at Khartoum shook the fidelity of the Shagiyeh, but Lord Charles Beresford's victory at Wad Habeshi had the effect of making Nejumi dread meeting the English on the river, and decided him to attack them on the desert.

"Lord Charles Beresford deserves the credit of having effected this and was thus the means of saving the entire British force.

"(Signed) DON GUISEPPE ORHWALDER

"(*23rd February*, 1893)"

It is obvious that the estimation of the conduct of the officers and men who fought at Wad Habeshi remains unaffected by the results of the action, which were neither definitely contemplated nor clearly foreseen. And the evidence I have quoted being irrelevant, strictly speaking, to any criticism of the action itself, is here cited, not in order to enhance the credit of the officers and men concerned but, for the sake both of its intrinsic interest, and for the purpose of illustrating, incidentally, the methods occasionally adopted under the system controlling the Royal Navy.

The effect of the action at Wad Habeshi exemplifies the extraordinary potency of the element of chance in war. Under what conceivable theory of tactics could it have been maintained that a penny steamer had the smallest chance of rescuing a detachment isolated in a hostile country, upon condition of twice engaging a powerful battery at short range, and twice defeating its garrison of sixty or a hundred to one? Or what self-respecting tactician would have pre-

dicted that in the extremely improbable event of success, its effect would have been to check, even momentarily, the advance by land of the main force of the enemy?

But the unexpected happened; and as it did happen, it would have been in accordance with a courteous precedent on the part of the authorities to have recognised the fact. I make no complaint of their action as regards myself; and only recall it here in the hope that no repetition of it will be permitted in respect of others perhaps less fortunate than I. The Admiralty refused to allow me to count my service in the Soudan either as time spent in command of a ship of war, or, as part of a period of command spent both in peace and war. Their Lordships' refusal might have involved my retirement before I had completed the time required to qualify for flag rank. The Queen's Regulations ordained: that a captain must have completed six years' service, of which the first three years must be in command of a ship of war at sea; or that he must have completed four years during war; or five years, of war and peace combined.

After having been for over two years in command of H.M.S. *Undaunted*, I applied (in May, 1892) for permission to count the 315 days in the Soudan during which I was borne on the books of H.M.S. *Alexandra*, which were allowed as sea-time by the Admiralty, in the required five years of war and peace combined. The application was refused, on the ground that war service could not be reckoned by a captain unless he was in command of a ship of war actually employed in active service at sea.

Having completed my three years' service in command at sea, I applied (in April, 1893) for permission to count the 315 days sea-time, although they preceded the three years in command at sea, as part of the required six years' service. The application was refused, upon the ground that its acceptance was not necessary in order to save me from retirement.

A year and a half afterwards (in January, 1895) I repeated my application, pointing out that in three cases

the Admiralty had, by order in council, conceded similar claims of admittedly much less force than my own, and that the only naval officers engaged in the Soudan war who were not allowed to count their time towards promotion were Captain Boardman and myself. Their Lordships then merely referred me to their previous answers. I may mention that my application was warmly and emphatically supported by Lord Wolseley.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

## THE SOUDAN WAR (*Continued*)

### XI. The Retreat

UPON the day after the rescue of Sir Charles Wilson's party, a court of inquiry, under my presidency, was held to investigate the conduct of the captains of the two wrecked steamers, and one of the Reises. The captains were acquitted. The Reis was found guilty of treachery, but his punishment was remitted in consideration of the fact that he had brought Lieutenant Stuart-Wortley safely down the river after the wreck of the *Bordein*.

The little *Safieh* was riddled with bullet-holes; she leaked like a sieve, so that even before the action of Wad Habeshi, the pumps must be kept going continually; and her bows, under the incessant concussion of the guns, had opened out like a flower. The sides came away from the stem, and in order to stop the water coming in, the natives had stuffed rags and mud into the openings, which of course widened them. Upon our return to Gubat, I caused a dry dock to be excavated in the bank; ran the bows of the steamer into it; closed it against the water with mud; and kept two black men baling out the water as hard as they could go for eight hours on end, while we cut and fitted a new stem and bolted the sides to it; a very difficult job, because the sides of the steamer were rotten. The other repairs having been effected, I took the *Safieh* (which was so decayed that the pumps must still be kept going) out

daily for foraging expeditions, to get cattle, sheep and vegetables, and also to show there was fight in us yet. There were no fowls, because the Mahdi had declared them to be unclean.

Captain Gascoigne and Khashm-el-Mus used to accompany me upon these expeditions, Gascoigne taking command of the raiding parties on shore: Lieutenant Robert A. J. Montgomerie (afterwards Rear-Admiral Montgomerie, C.B., C.M.G.) was of the greatest service. Montgomerie was of extraordinary physical strength and prowess. He joined me on 11th February, with Lieutenant G. W. Tyler, at Gubat. While helping to work the boats up the river, Montgomerie saved a gun which sank when the boat in which it was capsized. The weight of muzzle or breach (whichever it was) was well over 200 lb., and the water was shoulder-deep. Montgomerie picked up the gun, hove it upon his shoulder and waded ashore with it.

His exploits at Ismailia are still remembered. He was sitting in a saloon, where three French natives determined to provoke the English officer. They chose the wrong man. One of the trio upset Montgomerie's glass of beer, and although he did not apologise, Montgomerie, supposing him to have done it by accident, took no notice. A second man did the same, with the same result. Then the third hero deliberately threw down Montgomerie's glass with his hand. Montgomerie then acted instantly and with great rapidity. He knocked one man senseless, picked up another and threw him on the top of his friend, took the third and flung him up on the roof of the balcony.

Surgeon-General A. W. May reminds me that he and Montgomerie discovered, at some distance from the river, a garden wherein grew onions and limes. Montgomerie pulled the onions, while May collected the limes for the sick in hospital. But a lime-tree is armed with long and sharp thorns; and May, desiring to preserve his one and only uniform, stripped and climbed the tree in his birthday suit. Suddenly Arabs appeared; and May had but the

time to descend, pick up his clothes and fly with Montgomerie back to the steamer.

Surgeon-General May also reminds me that upon another foraging trip, we landed a party of Gordon's Soudanese troops to capture a flock of sheep. Before the blacks had time to get away with the sheep, the Arabs came down, and began to fire at them and also at the steamer. I sent a black sergeant-major and a bugler to hasten the retreat of the Soudanese. Two of them, each of whom was carrying a sheep, lagged somewhat; whereupon the sergeant-major lay down, took careful aim, and fired at them. Neither he nor they seemed to consider the method unusual.

It was on one of these foraging parties that Quartermaster Olden saved the entire raiding party. Captain Gascoigne, in command of a wild lot of Bashi-Bazouks and the most of the men from the *Safieh*, had gone some little distance inland to a village. I was left in the *Safieh* with six men to serve the Gardner gun. The steamer was lying alongside the bank, but not close in; for it was necessary to keep a certain depth of water under her keel in a falling river, and to be able to shove off quickly. I had poles ready rigged for this purpose. The Bashi-Bazouks, who began firing from the hip at random with loud cries so soon as they came on shore, had vanished into the distance with the rest of the party; when I perceived afar off a crowd of Dervishes gathering at a place at right angles to the line upon which the raiding party must return, and nearer to the *Safieh* than the village where was the raiding party. The Dervishes, therefore, evidently intended to cut off the British force.

I sent for Olden, gave him his instructions, and sent him on shore with two riflemen. The three ran like hares through the scrub towards the enemy. They ran at full speed for about 600 yards to get within range. Then they scattered, concealed themselves and fired; moved again swiftly, and fired again; and kept on repeating the manœuvre, until the Dervishes, believing that the scrub was

swarming with English riflemen, drew off; and the raiding party returned in safety. For this service, Olden was recommended by me for the conspicuous gallantry medal.

The black soldiers, going barefoot, used to come in with their feet transfixed by long thorns; these I cut out with a horse-lancet fitted to my knife; and the operation was like cutting leather. I had gained experience in performing it while getting the boats through at Wady Halfa. At Ismailia a more delicate operation fell to me. While fishing, my hook caught in a man's eyelid. The French surgeon who was summoned went to work with a lancet, and tried to pull the barb through the wound, causing the patient acute agony. I sent the doctor aside, and using one of a pair of breeches' bow-ties (for tying bows at the knees) drew the hook through to the shank, and severed it, much to the surgeon's indignation.

The expeditions up and down the river in the *Safieh* were amusing enough; but we were only making the best of the interval before the next move. Sir Charles Wilson had left Gubat on 6th February for Korti, where he arrived on the 9th bearing the news of the fall of Khartoum, and a full account of the condition of the Desert Column. Lord Wolseley telegraphed the information to Lord Hartington (Secretary of State for War), who telegraphed in reply: "Express warm recognition of Government of brilliant services of Sir C. Wilson and satisfaction at gallant rescue of his party."

Lord Wolseley, upon receipt of Sir C. Wilson's dispatch containing the account of the action at Abu Kru, fought on the 19th January, when Sir Herbert Stewart was wounded, had appointed Major-General Sir Redvers Buller to take command of the Desert Column, Sir Evelyn Wood being appointed chief of staff in his place. Buller had left Korti on 29th January, and had arrived at Jakdul on the 2nd February. Lord Wolseley had also dispatched the Royal Irish Regiment to reinforce the Desert Column. The Royal Irish marched on foot the whole way across the

Bayuda Desert, each man carrying 70 rounds of ammunition, filled water bottles and rolled greatcoats. The first detachment left Korti on the 28th January, the second on the 30th; both arriving at Jakdul on the 4th February. They left Jakdul on the 7th. Buller left on the following day; and upon arriving at Abu Klea, he left there two companies of the Royal Irish, the rest of which accompanied him to Gubat, for which place he started on the 10th. I saw the Royal Irish march in; a splendid body of fighting men, trained down to the last ounce, lean as hounds, and spoiling for a fight.

It will be observed that Buller was at Jakdul, half-way across the Desert, on the 4th February, on which date Lord Wolseley learned from Sir Charles Wilson of the fall of Khartoum. Lord Wolseley dispatched three sets of orders to Sir Redvers Buller in quick succession, the last reaching him at Abu Klea on the 10th, before he had resumed his march to Gubat.

Lord Wolseley's dispatch instructed Sir Redvers Buller to make every preparation for the evacuation of Gubat and the withdrawal of the Column. At the same time, its tenor left a certain discretion to Buller; who, replying to it in a private letter carried by the returning messenger to Lord Wolseley, "spoke," says Colonel Colville, in his official *History of the Sudan Campaign*, "hopefully of the situation." I think the presence of the Royal Irish, in magnificent condition, suggested to Buller that he could fight anybody anywhere.

In fact, when Sir Redvers came in to Gubat on 11th February, he wanted to remain and fight. At his request, I stated to him my view of the situation; which was, briefly, that unless we departed swiftly, we should be eaten up by the enemy, who were known to be advancing in immense force. I also reported officially that until the Nile rose, the two steamers remaining to us were practically useless: a consideration which proved conclusive. Sir Redvers Buller's dispatch, dated at Gubat 12th February, and addressed to

FIELD-MARSHAL THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT WOLSELEY, K.P., P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., D.C.L., L.L.D., O.M.
1833-1913

the chief of staff, describes the conclusions to which he came after having carefully reviewed the situation (*History of the Sudan Campaign*—Part II. p. 56). The camels were greatly reduced in number and were nearly worn out; but if the Column were to attempt any further enterprise, the camels must be sent to Jakdul and back to bring supplies, a journey which would take at least ten days. This circumstance was virtually conclusive. Sir Redvers adds: "I regret to have to express now an opinion different to that which I expressed to Lord Wolseley in a letter dated the night of the 10th instant; but when I then wrote, I was not aware of the condition of the steamers and of the fact that the big one could not pass a sandbank 25 miles below this. Lord C. Beresford considers it doubtful if the other one can either. . . . Since writing this I am confirmed in my opinion by the news that Mohammed Ahmed (the Mahdi) left Khartoum *en route* here on the 9th instant."

In the meantime, Lord Wolseley had ordered the River Column to halt on its way. On the 10th, General Earle, in command of the River Column, had been killed at the action of Kirbekan. Lord Wolseley, until he received Sir Redvers Buller's account of the desperate condition of the River Column—deprived of transport, encumbered with wounded, short of stores (owing to bad packing), and without boots—retained his intention of effecting a junction of the two columns at Berber. At the end of the third week in February that scheme was necessarily abandoned. The River Column was recalled; and Buller, then on his way back with the Desert Column, was instructed to return direct to Korti.

On the morning of 13th February the sick and wounded were dispatched with a convoy under the command of Colonel Talbot. Eight or nine miles out, the convoy was attacked, surrounded on three sides, and exposed to fire from the enemy concealed in the bush. Among the wounded were the scalded engine-room artificers; one of whom, recalling the incident in conversation with me

recently, said: "That was the first time my heart sank—when the bearers put down my litter, and the firing began."

After about two hours' engagement, when the convoy had lost eight killed and wounded, the Light Camel Regiment, under the command of Colonel Clarke, marching from Jakdul, opportunely appeared, and the enemy drew off.

Colonel Talbot (my cousin) very kindly sent me a copy of his diary, kept at the time. His account of the affair gives little indication of what was in fact a passage of very considerable danger. He was encumbered with a large number of sick and wounded; his force was small; the force of the enemy, though it was impossible to estimate the exact numbers, was formidable; and in spite of Talbot's skilful and prompt dispositions of defence, the issue must have been very doubtful had not the Light Camel Regiment arrived.

Colonel Talbot's account runs as follows: "*February 13th.*—Received orders from Sir R. Buller to march for Jakdul at dawn with 75 sick and wounded, Sir H. Stewart and the worst cases carried in litters borne by Egyptian soldiers from Khartoum. Escort of 300 men joined from the 3 Camel Regiments and about 200 Gordon's Egyptians from Khartoum.

"*February* 14.—Marched at dawn 8 miles, and halted for breakfast. Outposts, just as we were about to resume march, sent in report of approach of large force of Arabs—mounted men, riflemen, and spearmen. The Column was formed up, the wounded in the centre surrounded by camels lying down, and outside them the Egyptian soldiers. The Camel Corps troops were formed in two squares, one of the Heavy and Guards' Camel Regiments in front of the Column, and the other of the Mounted Infantry in rear. Skirmishers were sent into the bush to feel for the enemy. The enemy opened fire and worked all round our force, apparently trying to ascertain our weakest point. It was impossible to estimate the strength of the enemy owing to the thick bush, but a considerable number of riflemen, supported by a large

force of spearmen, were seen, and about 30 horsemen were counted. After the affair had lasted about two hours, and we had lost 8 men killed and wounded, the Light Camel Regiment on the march to Gubat appeared unexpectedly, and narrowly escaped becoming engaged with us, owing to both forces being unaware of the proximity of the other, and through the bush it was difficult to distinguish the Arabs from ourselves. No doubt the arrival of the Light Camel Regiment accounted for the sudden disappearance of the enemy."

It was Colonel Brabazon (now Major-General Sir J. P. Brabazon, C.B., C.V.O.), second in command of the Light Camel Corps, who, when the Column had marched nearly half-way from Abu Klea to Metemmeh, went to his commanding officer, Colonel Stanley Clarke, and suggested that the Column should be immediately diverted to the scene of action. Colonel Brabazon led the Column in the direction of the firing, and his two or three hundred camels made so great a dust that the Arabs thought a whole army was advancing upon their flank, and instantly fled away. The result was that, hidden in the bush, the Light Camel Corps occupied the ground vacated by the enemy, unknown to the convoy, which continued to fire at the place they supposed the Arabs to be. General Brabazon's account of the affair, which he very kindly sent to me, is as follows:

"I halted the Column, and the bush being very thick, the trees stopped most of the bullets; nevertheless, they were knocking up the dust at the feet of our camels, and a bullet struck my mess-tin. I ordered our regimental call to be sounded, 'The Camels (Campbells) are coming,' 'Lights Out,' and finally 'Dinners.' But it was not until two or three of us pushed our way through the bush into the open, whence I saw the convoy preparing to give us another volley, that they realised we were friends and not foes, and precious glad they were to see us. They had only a small escort and were of course hampered with the sick and wounded, and I think everyone who was there will agree

that they were in a bad way. . . . I dined at the Guards' mess afterwards, and Douglas Dawson said that he had just given his men the range preparatory to their firing another volley, when he put up his glasses and made out the helmets and red morocco coverings of the camel saddles, and shouted, 'Come down! They are our fellows.' Then, Dawson said, his soldier servant, who was standing behind him, remarked: "Why, I could have told you they were our fellows ten minutes before!' I suppose he had recognised the 'Dinners' call."

So ended a comedy which had come very near to being a tragedy. Gordon's Egyptian soldiers, who were carrying the wounded, put the litters down when the firing began. Among the wounded were poor Sir Herbert Stewart, devotedly nursed by Major Frank Rhodes, Major Poë, Royal Marines, Sub-Lieutenant E. L. Munro and Lieutenant Charles Crutchley. Poë and Crutchley each had a leg amputated. All the wounded were lying helpless on the sand, listening to the firing, and moment by moment expecting the terrible Dervish rush. A violent death was very close to them, when Brabazon and his men came in the nick of time. The convoy had one of the narrowest escapes in the history of the British Army. It remains to add that Colonel Brabazon received no recognition of his action of any kind from the authorities.

Colonel Talbot had been continuously employed upon the difficult and arduous convoy duty since the arrival of the Desert Column at Gubat on the 21st. Two days later Talbot started to return to Jakdul to fetch supplies. Not he nor his men nor his camels had a day's rest from the 8th January, when the Desert Column left Korti, till the 27th, when the convoy was back again at Jakdul. The convoy reached Gubat on the 31st January; next day came the news of the fall of Khartoum; and the same evening the convoy marched again for Jakdul with sick and wounded. From Jakdul it returned with Sir Redvers Buller; arrived at Gubat on the 11th February; and started again on the 13th,

as already related, with another party of sick and wounded. On the way back to Korti, Colonel Talbot, without engineers or commissariat, constructed a camp and built forts at Megaga Wells, where the main body, including the Naval Brigade, joined his convoy on 2nd March.

After Colonel Talbot's convoy had left Gubat on 13th February, I disposed of the poor old *Safieh* and the *Tewfikiyeh*, lest upon our departure they should be taken by the enemy. The six brass guns were spiked and thrown overboard, the ammunition was destroyed, the eccentric straps were removed from the machinery, and finally the valves were opened and the vessels sunk.

Then came the sad destruction of the stores for which we had no transport. The number of camels would only suffice to carry rations for three days, by the end of which the Column would have arrived at Abu Klea, where were more stores. When Colonel Talbot's convoy of supplies reached Gubat two days previously, the garrison had for ten days been living on short rations: nevertheless, more than half of what he brought must be destroyed. Count Gleichen (*With the Camel Corps up the Nile*) says that "19,000 lbs. of flour, 3000 lbs. of biscuit, 21,220 lbs. of beef, 900 lbs. of bacon, 1100 lbs. of tea, oatmeal, preserved vegetables, coffee, and all sorts of stores were pierced and thrown into the river"—an example of waste in war resulting from deficient transport.

Some of the medical comforts, small bottles of champagne and port, were distributed. One among us—I think his name was Snow—took a bottle of wine and swore he would keep it till he drank it in Khartoum. *And he did.* He went into Khartoum with Kitchener thirteen years afterwards, and drank his libation in the conquered city.

That incident reminds me that, when I went with the party of members of the House of Commons to Russia in 1912, a Russian farmer sent a note to the British admiral, of whom he said he had heard, together with a bottle containing mustard which he had grown, and which he sent

as a token that the aforesaid British admiral would give his enemies mustard when he met them; for, said the farmer, the enemies of England would certainly be the enemies of Russia. I have that bottle of mustard.

What went to my heart when the stores were destroyed, was the dreadful waste of my drums of precious lubricating oil, carried so far with so great labour. My tears mingled with the oil as it was poured out upon the sand.

On the 14th February, at 5.30 a.m., the Desert Column quitted Gubat and started on the long return march to Korti, officers and men alike on foot, excepting the Hussars. There was hardly a pair of boots in the whole column. Some of the men cut up old rifle-buckets and tied the pieces with string to the soles of their feet. As for my sailors, they marched barefoot, every man carrying his rifle, cutlass, and 70 cartridges, and many of them towing reluctant camels. One camel to every four men was allotted to carry saddle-bags and blankets; and the camels kept dropping and dying all the way. By the time he had been three days out, Count Gleichen, in charge of the baggage, had lost 92 camels. At first the weather was cool with a northerly breeze, and all started well. On the march, in default of water, I used to spread my clothes in the sun while I rubbed myself all over with sand; a dry bath that was highly cleansing and refreshing. On the 15th February we came to Abu Klea, somewhat weary.

We were of course in constant expectation of attack. On the next day (16th) the Naval Brigade occupied a sand redoubt, on which the two Gardner guns were mounted.

Sir Redvers Buller, finding that the water supply was insufficient and that there was not enough food for the camels, sent on the Soudanese troops, baggage, stores and camp-followers under escort to Jakdul, while he halted at Abu Klea to keep the enemy in check, until the unloaded camels returned from Jakdul, and until further instructions arrived from headquarters. The remainder of the Column, entrenched at Abu Klea, thus became the rearguard, in the

air, as the phrase is; isolated for the time being and deprived of transport and reserve stores; a dangerous position forced upon the general by the lack of camels.

In the evening began the customary desert performance, opened by the Dervishes firing at long range from a hill-top commanding the camp, and continued during the long, cold, sleepless night with intermittent sniping to a tom-tom accompaniment. But our men were seasoned by this time; and although one among them was hit now and again, the situation no longer set a strain upon their nerves, but was accepted as part of the routine. That night two men were killed and thirteen wounded. It is true that the faithful José Salvatro, my Maltese servant, who had done and suffered so much, lost patience on this occasion. He was heating cocoa over the fire, when a bullet struck the tin and splashed the hot cocoa all over him.

"Why they fire *me*, sare?" said José. "Always firing *me*. *I* never did them any harm."

In the morning (the 17th) the enemy opened fire with a gun; which, after three or four rounds, was knocked out by the Naval Brigade with a Gardner.

I had walked a little way from the redoubt, when I was knocked over by a stunning blow striking me at the base of the spine, and lay helpless. I thought I was done; and I thought what an unlucky dog I was to have come through so much, to die on the way back from a wound in a place so undignified. But it was only a ricochet; my men carried me in; and I speedily recovered.

During the day Major F. M. Wardrop, D.A.A.G., and Lieutenant R. J. Tudway of the Mounted Infantry, with three men, employed the tactics I had used outside Alexandria two years previously. Riding swiftly from one point to another, and concealing themselves in the intervals, they impressed the Dervishes with the delusion that a large force threatened them in rear, and so caused them to retreat. In the afternoon, Lieutenant-Colonel H. McCalmont arrived with the news of the action of the River Column at Kirbekan

on the 10th, and of the death of General Earle. The mail from Korti contained a kind message of congratulation addressed by the Khedive to myself, referring to the engagement at Wad Habeshi, as well as congratulations from home. The total number of killed and wounded during the 16th and 17th was three men killed, and four officers and 23 men wounded. We heard on the 21st of the death of our beloved General, Sir Herbert Stewart, who, in spite of all our hopes, had succumbed to his wound on the 17th, during the march of Colonel Talbot's convoy, seven miles north of Geb-el-Nus. He was buried with full military honours on the following day near the wells of Jakdul.

On the 22nd February a convoy under Colonel Brabazon arrived with 782 camels. These were only just sufficient to move the stores and supplies.

It may here be noted that it was only a day or two previously that Lord Wolseley had received at Korti Sir Redvers Buller's letters describing the complete collapse of the transport of the Desert Column; and it was this information, together with a minute from Sir Evelyn Wood, who was at Jakdul, that finally decided Lord Wolseley to abandon his intention of combining the Desert and River Columns to hold posts along the Nile preparatory to an autumn campaign. At the same time, great anxiety with regard to the Desert Column prevailed at home.

Upon the morning of the next day (the 23rd) our picquets reported that the enemy had received a reinforcement of some 8000 men and six guns. Perhaps the Column had never been in more imminent danger than it was at that moment.

Sir Redvers Buller discussed the situation with me. I expressed the opinion that the large force of the enemy would cut off our advance, rush us, and then move upon Jakdul and so on to Korti itself; and remarked that the Column was short of transport and of provisions, and would be short of water.

"What would you do if you were in command?" said Buller.

I told him that in the evening I would light a larger number of camp-fires than usual, and, leaving them burning in order to deceive the enemy, I would then depart in silence and with speed.

"For a sailor ashore," said Buller, "you've a good head. I'll do it."

And he did.

At two o'clock the same afternoon, Sir Redvers Buller sent on his sick and wounded—32 of all ranks—with a convoy of 300 men commanded by Colonel Stanley Clarke; and that night, at 7.30, the rest of the Column stole forth into the desert, leaving a ring of camp-fires flaming in the dark behind us. We halted after four hours' march and bivouacked in peace. Next day (the 24th) we were sniped by a few wandering scouts: and save for these, saw no enemy. Then began the three days' hard marching, on short rations, and very little water, in great heat, to Jakdul. Many of the men fell out: but not one man of the Naval Brigade.

We arrived at Jakdul on the 26th February. I did not keep a diary: but Lieutenant Colin Keppel's journal defines the situation in three eloquent words: "Water, mails, cigarettes!"

Next day I found time to write home, the first opportunity for so doing during the past six weeks.

"Even now (I wrote), I am writing in a storm of sand and wind, my paper blowing one way and my helmet another, among my camels, who smell most poisonous. Poor things, they were eight days without water, and had only what food they could get when foraging in the desert. And they have so many and so large holes in their backs, that I am obliged to put shot-plugs in, to keep the water in when they drink. . . ."

It was true that I put shot-plugs in the camels. My official report (and what can be truer than an official report?)

contains under date 27th February the sole entry: "Employed repairing camels' sides by plugging them with oakum!" Lord Wolseley laughed when he read it. But although the surgery may appear empirical, it was wonderfully successful. The admixture of tar acted as an antiseptic.

On the following day (28th February) we resumed the march to Korti; on 2nd March the Naval Brigade joined Colonel Talbot's convoy at Megaga Wells, with the Heavy Camel Regiment and Royal Artillery. The Guards' Camel Regiment had gone on to Abu Halfa. The remainder of the Column under Sir Evelyn Wood left Jakdul on 3rd March.

At Megaga Wells Colonel Talbot took command and we left for Korti, officers and men continuing to march on foot, very few having soles to their boots. There was one camel allocated to carry the kits of five men; 30 camels carried water; and 10 carried the sick. The thermometer registered 112° in the shade, and a hot wind blew. And so we came to Korti on the 8th March, two months after we had left it.

Lord Wolseley inspected the Naval Brigade on parade; and expressed his extreme satisfaction at the work they had done, and the manner in which it had been performed. The next day the Brigade was broken up, and told off to different stations, under the command of Captain Boardman. I was ordered to rejoin the staff of Lord Wolseley.

Colonel Talbot notes that the Heavy Camel Regiment, of which he was in command, had marched about 850 miles; that the strength of the regiment upon leaving Korti was 23 officers and 373 men; and that its strength upon its return was 15 officers and 256 men.

Only four of his men arrived on camels. Not one of my sailors fell out during the whole way from Gubat to Korti.

Here, perhaps, it is not inopportune to place on record how delighted I was to work with the Army. We are really only one Service, for the protection of one Empire.

Nor, perhaps, to relate how that Her Majesty Queen

Victoria, when she pinned the C.B. to my coat, said low, "I am very glad to give you this, Lord Charles. I am very pleased with you."

Her Majesty's words were my reward; for I will own that decorations as such have never attracted me.

I desire to record the excellent service of Captain F. R. Boardman (afterwards Admiral Frederick Ross Boardman, C.B.), who invariably did his utmost at the base to keep the Naval Brigade supplied. It was not Captain Boardman's fortune to be in the first fighting line, where is all the fun and where is often all the renown; yet the success of the fighting line depends entirely upon the energy, forethought and unselfish loyalty of those at the base of supply.

I happened to be discussing this point with a certain highly distinguished personage.

"We got all the credit," I said, "but not half enough was given to those at the base who sent forward the bullets and the grub."

"Grub? What is grub?" inquired the highly distinguished personage.

"I beg your pardon, sir. It is a slang term for food and provisions."

"So grub is food, is it? How very interesting!" said the highly distinguished personage.

The sequel to our expedition was of course Lord Kitchener's masterly campaign. After the capture of Omdurman, and the blowing up of the Mahdi's tomb, it was publicly stated that a certain officer was bringing home the skull of the holy man, intending to make it into an inkpot. The House of Commons (of which I was then a member) having nothing better to do, discussed the matter on 5th June, 1899. Lord Kitchener sat in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery. Mr. John Morley (now Lord Morley) protested against the desecration of the tomb of the Mahdi. I replied to Mr. Morley, protesting against his assumption of authority in the matter. I said:

"Now I wish to take, most respectfully, issue with the

right honourable the Member for Montrose upon this point. I say this with great respect and with great earnestness that, so far as I can judge from the right honourable gentleman's writings and by his teachings, he is no judge of religious fanaticism whatever. I say this with respect because, as I understand what he has written, he does not regard religious fanaticism as anything that can ever be powerful, because he says himself that he does not understand the question at all. That being so, I cannot accept the right honourable gentleman as a guide as to what should be done to check religious fanaticism. . . . The right honourable the Member for Montrose does not believe in the power of religious fanaticism. . . ."

Mr. Morley: "The Noble Lord cannot have read my writings, or else he would have seen that fanaticism was one of the things I have written most about" (Hansard, 5th June, 1899).

A member said to me in the lobby afterwards: "You really ought not to say these things. Why do you make these assertions?"

"Because," I said, "I have read Mr. Morley's works."

"You know very well," said my friend, "that you have never read any of his books."

"I beg your pardon," I replied. "I never go to sleep without reading one of Mr. Morley's books, and I never read one of Mr. Morley's books without going to sleep."

## CHAPTER XXXIV

## THE SOUDAN WAR (*Continued*)

### XII. Sequel and Conclusion

FOR the first few weeks after the return of the Desert Column to Korti, we all believed that there would be an autumn campaign, and we looked forward to the taking of Khartoum. Lord Wolseley distributed his troops among various stations along the Nile from the Hannek Cataract to Abu Dom, there to remain in summer quarters. In his dispatch of 6th March, 1885 (Colville's *History of the Soudan Campaign*, Part II.), Lord Wolseley indicated the force he would require, and requested that the railway might be continued from Halfa to Ferkeh, a distance of 47 miles. The railway was begun and was eventually completed. By 1st April the troops were occupying their allotted stations. One distinguished officer was so certain of remaining in his quarters, that he sowed vegetables in his garden. But upon 13th April Lord Wolseley was ordered to consider the measures requisite to effect a total withdrawal; and British faith was once more broken by a British Government.

By that time Lord Wolseley, to whose personal staff I was once more attached, had been to Dongola and had come to Cairo.

The news from home consisted chiefly of rumours of war with Russia; and I was gratified to learn that largely in consequence of my representations 50 machine guns had been sent to India. Machine guns were then upon

their trial; and I had been consulted by the authorities as to their precise utility. We also heard of the hearty cordiality and enthusiasm with which the Prince and Princess of Wales were being greeted in Ireland upon the occasion of their visit to my country. There had been some misgivings upon the subject; and I had had the honour to suggest to the Prince that if, as well as visiting towns and cities in state, he went into the country among my people and shot with them and hunted with them like the sportsman he was, he would find no more loyal or delightful people in the Queen's dominions.

As a matter of fact, neither in the towns nor anywhere else in Ireland, did the Prince and Princess receive aught but a most hearty welcome. Nor did the Nationalist party even attempt to arouse a formal demonstration directed against their visitors. They might have suggested, but did not, that some such conventional protest was due to the doctrine representing Ireland as a conquered country.

At the end of April Lord Wolseley and his staff, including myself, embarked in the s.s. *Queen* for Souakim.

The Souakim expedition under the command of General Sir G. Graham was then in full progress. On the 20th February he had been directed to destroy the power of Osman Digna, and to guard the construction of the Souakim-Berber railway. On the 20th March, Graham fought the successful action of Hashin. On the 22nd was fought the bloody engagement of McNeill's zeriba. The British were surprised while at work upon the construction of the zeriba; the first shot was fired at 2.50 p.m., and the cease fire was sounded at 3.10. During that twenty minutes of confused and desperate fighting, some 1500 Arabs out of an attacking force of 5000 were killed. Desultory firing continued for an hour, when the enemy retreated. According to the official history, the British losses were 150 killed, 148 missing, 174 wounded, and 501 camels killed and missing.

The field of battle lay some six miles from Souakim; I

rode out with Lord Wolseley to see it. Before we had ridden three miles in the dust and the glare of sunlight, the hot air carried a dreadful waft of corruption. The stench thickened as we drew near. A dusky cloud of kites and vultures hovered sluggishly and unafraid among a wilderness of discoloured mounds. The sand was heaped so scantily upon the dead, that lipless skulls, and mutilated shanks, and clenched hands, were dreadfully displayed. The bodies of the camels were mingled in a pile of corruption, clustered upon by the birds of prey.

And wandering about that charnel-ground, raking in it with a hooked stick, was a strange man whom I had met years ago in Japan, where he used to photograph the cruel executions of that country. He spoke no known tongue, but chattered in a jumble of languages; and here he was, equipped with a camera, and placidly exploring horrors with a hooked stick. Whence he came, and whither he went, we stayed not to inquire.

Day after day, for many days, the convoys of the expedition must pass and repass this place, which lay in their direct route, at the slow march of laden camels, and walking warily, lest they stepped ankle-deep into a festering corpse.

General Graham, having occupied Tamai, Handub, and Tambuk, dispersed the force of Mohammed Sardun on the 6th May; an operation which left him practically master of the district. But on the 11th May, Lord Wolseley, acting upon the instructions of the Government, ordered the general withdrawal of all troops from the Soudan. On the 19th, we left Souakim for Cairo. On the 27th June, Lord Wolseley turned over the command of the forces in Egypt to General Sir F. Stephenson, and with his staff left Cairo for Alexandria, there to embark for England.

Seven days previously (on 20th June), though we knew not of it, the Mahdi, who had given us so much trouble, had died in Khartoum. There he lay, listening perhaps for the footsteps of the returning English; for he knew that, although the English are ruled by people having the appearance of

men but the ways of a weathercock, they may go, but they always come back. Thirteen years the false prophet slept in peace: and then the man who had sojourned in a cave at the wells of Abu Klea secretly collecting information, what time the Desert Column followed a forlorn hope, rode into the Dervish city, and destiny was fulfilled. Lord Kitchener of Khartoum fulfilled it, as strong men have a way of doing. A poet once said that the soul of Gladstone is now probably perching on the telegraph wires that bridge the desert where we fought to save Gordon, too late. I know nothing about that; but I know what the betrayal cost.

We learned afterwards that ere the Mahdi died, he had begun to concentrate his armies upon Dongola, a movement that was continued after his death, until the Dervishes were finally defeated by General Stephenson, at Ginnis, on 30th December, 1885.

General Dormer had a way of his own with the Mahdi's disciples. Addressing a prisoner, he said:

"I suppose you believe in the Mahdi because he can work miracles. Can your prophet pluck out his eye and put it back again? Well, I am no prophet, but I can."

And with that, Dormer took his glass eye from its socket, tossed it in the air, caught it, and replaced it. The Arab was dumbfounded.

## CHAPTER XXXV

## ORGANISATION FOR WAR

THERE is nothing quite so dead as dead politics; therefore I do not intend to dwell upon my political experiences, except in so far as they relate to the purpose for which I entered Parliament. That purpose was to serve the interests of the Royal Navy. Politics, as such, have never greatly interested me; the Party system always appeared to me to involve a sacrifice of principle; and if I am associated with the party with which I am naturally most in sympathy, at least I may claim to have attacked them quite as often as I have attacked their political opponents. In return, they have often declined to support me in my proposals; which, however, have always been supported by the public, and which as a rule have ultimately been adopted by the authorities.

In 1885, the Parliamentary tradition which I had known ten years previously, remained unchanged. During the succeeding generation it became gradually transformed. Old members, like myself, will understand what I mean. New members can have little notion of the House of Commons their fathers knew. In one respect, at least, the alteration is even startling. The public interest in politics and in Parliament, once so general and so sincere, has now almost ceased to exist. What that contemptuous indifference may portend, is another question.

In June, 1885, the Liberal Government, having passed their Franchise and Redistribution Bills, and having aroused general and deep indignation concerning their conduct of

the Soudan campaign, chose to resign upon an amendment to Mr. Childers's Budget. Lord Salisbury accepted office, and wound up the session. The general election took place during the autumn. I stood for East Marylebone, my opponents being the Rev. J. R. Diggle and Mr. D. Grant. Mr. Diggle apparently withdrew; for I find that my majority of 944 votes was over Mr. Grant's poll. The main topic of my speeches was the necessity of increasing the Fleet, and of maintaining the Union. For rumours that Mr. Gladstone intended to bring forward a Home Rule policy were in the air.

The result of the election was: Liberals 334, Conservatives 250, Irish Nationalists 86; placing the Conservatives at the mercy of the Irish. Lord Salisbury's Government were defeated upon an amendment to the Address, brought forward by Mr. Jesse Collings, in January, 1886. Lord Salisbury resigned, and Mr. Gladstone returned to office.

Then came his conversion to Home Rule, and the secession of the Liberal Unionists. On 7th July, 1886, the Government were defeated on the Home Rule Bill. At the general election which followed, the Radicals and Home Rulers were returned in a minority of 118. I was again returned for East Marylebone, my opponent being Professor Beesly, with an increased majority. In the new Parliament, Lord Salisbury was Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; Lord Randolph Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. W. H. Smith, Leader of the House of Commons; and Lord George Hamilton, First Lord of the Admiralty.

It was during one of the Marylebone elections that I was visited by a deputation of clergymen of various denominations, who solemnly assured me that, if I persisted in supporting the proposal to open museums and picture-galleries on Sundays, they would not vote for me.

"Gentlemen, has it ever occurred to you that I have not asked you to vote for me?" said I. "Or that I have never in my life asked a man for a vote?"

They looked at one another. In the ensuing silence, I told them that if they did not approve of me, they ought, as honest men, to vote for my opponent. They sadly and silently departed, and I saw them no more: nor do I know for whom were cast the votes of those men of God; but I was returned to Parliament.

Lord Folkestone was standing for Enfield; and when I went down to speak for him, I found bread upon the waters which returned to me after many days, in the shape and size of a Royal Marine. While I was speaking, there arose a tumult at the back of the hall. So far as I could make out from the platform, a man was insisting on being heard. I called to him to come up to the platform, where, if he had anything to say, he could say it. Whereupon a large, resolute and aggressive person came swiftly up to me. I thought he wanted to fight, and was ready for him. But he seized my hands in his, shook them warmly, then turned to the audience and told them the whole story of how I had saved his life off the Falkland Islands, years before, when I was a lieutenant in the *Galatea*. The ship was lying at anchor; it was a dark night; when the Marine somehow fell overboard. I had just come on board from a shooting expedition, and my pockets were full of cartridges. I dived after the man, and seized him. Catching the end of a coil of rope, I went down and down, wondering if the other end of the rope I held was fast, until at last I felt myself and the Marine being pulled upwards. As we came to the surface, the ship's corporal, who had jumped overboard, got hold of us, and we were hauled in-board by the quartermaster.

The story was received with great enthusiasm, and I cannot but suppose it contributed to win the election for my friend, none the less because there was no real connection whatever between its subject and politics.

Upon my return from Egypt in 1885, I was convinced of the superiority in guns and armour and general excellence of the French ships of war over our own, because I had utilised many opportunities of comparing the vessels of

the two navies. Observation and reasoning had also taught me that in many most essential respects the British Navy was deficient. And above all, it was deficient in organisation for war. In these opinions I was confirmed by a large number of my brother officers, among whom I may mention Lord Alcester, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Keppel, Admiral Sir Thomas M. C. Symonds, Admiral Sir Geoffrey T. Phipps Hornby, Captain E. R. Fremantle, Admiral Sir Charles G. J. B. Elliot, Vice-Admiral Sir William Montagu Dowell, Vice-Admiral Sir R. Vesey Hamilton.

Accordingly, I enforced the necessity of reform in these matters in my public speeches, which were numerous. At that time, in the summer of 1885, I find that I was demanding a loan of twenty millions to be expended upon a shipbuilding programme.

During the previous year, 1884, there had appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, then edited by the late Mr. W. T. Stead, the famous series of articles over the signature of "One who knows the Facts," dealing with the state of the Navy, which did more than any other Press representations before or since to awaken public opinion to the true condition of our defences. It was those articles, together with articles in *The Times* and other newspapers, and the excellent letters of naval officers—notably those of Admiral of the Fleet Sir T. Symonds—which prepared the way for me.

International relations with both France and Russia were uneasy; and war was always a possibility. I knew that we were unprepared for war. I knew that so long as there was no department charged with the duty of representing what was required, why it was required, and how much it would cost, that we should continue to be unprepared for war. I believed it to be my duty to awaken public opinion to the danger in which the country undoubtedly stood.

Nor was I alone in this respect. Not only a number of my brother officers, but many students of the subject, did

their best to enlighten the nation. We were of course told that we were creating a scare; but a study of the Press of those days shows that nearly every great newspaper, irrespective of its politics, demanded the strengthening and reorganisation of our defences. Personally, I received great support from the Press. Writers on the subject of national defence were at least sure that I had, personally, nothing to gain by publishing the truth.

Indeed, I had thus early in my career, when I was a junior captain, to choose between the stormy enterprise of the reformer, and the safer course of official acquiescence and party obedience, leading to promotion and to office. In making the choice, I had to consider that as a naval officer advocating this and that in spite of the authorities, I laid myself open to the charge that such matters were none of my business, which was to obey orders. The argument is quite legitimate. On the other hand, knowing the facts of the case, clearly perceiving the danger, and (as I believed) knowing also how to remedy what was wrong, I might (and did) justly contend that my duty to Sovereign and country came before all. I admit that these things were not necessarily my business; not, at least, until I made them my business. But I may also remark that the deplorable condition of the national defences in 1885 was the result of the united negligence of the people whose business it was to maintain them, and who had no department which could supply them with the necessary information; and that, in consequence, someone had to do something. The history of England was made by persons who did what it was not their business to do, until they made it their business.

My difficulties were then, and have always been, inherent in the nature of the case. It is part of the character of the English people to trust in authority, as such; and they are quite right in principle; whose observance, however, induces them to be slow to act when authority has proved untrustworthy. Again, in order that my case should be proved beyond cavil, the supreme demonstration of war was required. It is not

enough that because my recommendations were carried into execution, war was prevented; for only the few who know the facts and who are acquainted with the complex shifts of international policy, understand the value of potential armed force in the exercise of diplomacy. I may claim, indeed, I do claim, that sooner or later my recommendations have been adopted by the authorities, who thereby proved the justice of my case. Nor do I complain because they have gained the credit accruing to their action; for it must always be the man who does the thing who earns the laurel. And he who insists upon assuming the office of reformer, must make up his mind at the beginning to renounce without bitterness whatever delight he might discover in reward or fame or renown. Moreover, the credit belongs to no one man, but to the many fearless officers who urged reform, and not less to the great body of those officers of the Service who silently and loyally kept the routine going, and without whom no reforms could avail.

The whole position is of course quite illogical; as illogical as that venerable anomaly, the British Constitution, which exists entirely in the brains of the learned. A certain set of persons are selected to govern the nation by a majority of votes, those votes being allocated upon an accidental system which gives to a small number exactly the same representation as an immensely larger number. Out of that set a few are selected to form a governing committee called the Cabinet, which is virtually omnipotent so long as it continues to act more or less in accordance with the wishes of the majority which elected it. The Cabinet is, therefore, in practice, constrained to act in accordance with the known opinions of its supporters; a course of action which is a totally different thing from the course which it is theoretically supposed to follow. Theoretically, the Cabinet shapes its policy to ensure the welfare of the whole nation. Theoretically, the business of the Government is to govern. Theoretically, its members are the men in the country best fitted for the work. Sometimes they are; and in proportion as they are, they will

approximate to the conventional theory and will depart from the common practice, and will do what is right instead of what is expedient. Thus every Government oscillates between pure opportunism and honest patriotism. And in the result, the only method of obtaining reform in any direction is so to persuade the public of its necessity, that the party in power will perceive that it is more to their own profit to grant than to withhold it. And in justice to the politicians, it should be added that under the existing system, many concessions must be made by the most austere statesman, if the Duke of Wellington's ultimate principle is to be observed; the principle that the King's Government must be carried on.

In July, 1884, Lord Northbrook, the First Lord of the Admiralty in Mr. Gladstone's administration, publicly declared that if he had £3,000,000 to spend upon the Navy, that force was so sufficient and so efficient that he would not know on what to spend the money. Before the end of the year he was compelled to find out how to spend £5,500,000, and to spend them. From a Liberal Government the Salisbury Government of 1886 inherited the completing of the Northbrook shipbuilding programme; whose provisions were based, not upon any intelligible scheme of preparation for war but, upon the Russian war-scare. Those who were acquainted with the real posture of affairs were not deluded by the mere haphazard expenditure of a few millions, voted in order to soothe public opinion.

Nor did ministers themselves deny the total inadequacy of their measures. In March, 1886, when the Liberal administration was still in power, I brought forward in the House of Commons an amendment empowering the Government to expend an additional sum of over £5,000,000 upon the construction of 35 cruisers, three armoured cruisers, and 21 torpedo craft; pointing out at the same time that the expenditure would provide employment for a large number of unemployed workmen, both skilled and unskilled. Of course the amendment was defeated; but it is significant that

the necessity of such an increase was virtually admitted by the Government spokesmen. I also urged the abolition of 69 useless vessels of war, which I specified, and the expenditure of the money saved in their maintenance, upon new vessels.

At that time, it was nearly impossible to obtain accurate official information with regard to naval affairs. I asked for a return of the relative strength of the Fleets of this and other countries; which was granted; and which aroused considerable comment in the Press. The return has since been issued every year; first in my name, then in the name of Sir Charles Dilke, and at present in the name of Mr. Dickenson.

But the first half of the year 1886 was consumed with the Home Rule Bill. Turn to the files of the time, and you shall see precisely the same arguments, declarations, denunciations, intrigues and rumours of intrigues, charges and counter-charges which were repeated in 1893, and which are being reiterated all over again as if they had just been discovered, in this year of grace 1913. We who stood to our guns in 1886 know them by heart. We have been denounced as traitors and rebels because we stand by Ulster, for so long, that we are beginning to think we shall escape hanging at the latter end of it.

I know my countrymen, both of north and south, for I am of both; and they know me. Isaac Butt once asked me to lead the Home Rule party; because, he said, my brother Waterford was widely respected and popular, and was thoroughly acquainted with the Irish question, of which I also had a sufficient knowledge. I might have accepted the invitation, had I believed that Home Rule was what my countrymen needed. But it was not. The settlement of the land question was and is the only cure for Irish ills. Mr. Wyndham with his Land Act did more for Ireland than any Government that ever was; and I say it, who have lost a great part of my income under the operation of the Act.

Not that the Irish would have obtained the Wyndham Act, had they not been incorrigibly intractable. By

demanding a great deal more than they wanted, which they called Home Rule, they got what they did want, which was the land. Their avidity for the land never diminished; whereas the cry for Home Rule died down; until, by one of the inconsistencies of Irish politics which so bewilder the Englishman, it was revived by John Finton Lalor and Michael Davitt, who welded the two aspirations together. In order to rid themselves of the Home Rule spectre, the English Government conceded the land. And then, owing to another unexpected twist, they found the spectre wasn't laid after all. For the English had not learned that so long as they permit Ireland to be so superbly over-represented, so long will they have trouble. Sure, they'll learn the lesson some day, if God will; for there's no lack of teaching, the way it is. In the meantime, it is hard for the English people to argue against what appears to be the demand of the majority of the Irish people.

But so far was the Government in power in 1912 from understanding or attempting to understand Irishmen, that the defence of the Home Rule Bill was constantly relegated to two eminent descendants of an interesting Asiatic race; who, however distinguished in their own walk of life, could never in any circumstances know or care anything whatsoever about Ireland. The Ulstermen, at least, resented the proceeding.

One of the Nationalists attacked me with great ferocity in the House. He accused my family for generations past of having committed atrocious crimes, and asserted that I myself had entered Parliament for the sole purpose of escaping active service in case of war with a foreign Power.

"Why did you say all those things?" said I to him in the lobby afterwards.

"Sure, Lord Char-less," says he, "ye're an Irishman, and ye'll understand I didn't mean a word of it."

Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill having been rejected in 1886, Lord Salisbury returned to power with a majority that defied Mr. Parnell and his friends, and so there was no

more Home Rule for a while. 'Tis the pure morality of the Home Rule demand that moves the political conscience; and that the morality always acts upon that sensitive organ when there is a controlling Irish vote, and not at any other time, is of course a mere coincidence.

In August, 1886, I was appointed junior lord at the Admiralty, succeeding Captain James E. Erskine.

"No doubt you'll try to do a number of things, but you'll run up against a dead wall. Your sole business will be to sign papers," said Captain Erskine, and so departed.

I speedily discovered that there was at the Admiralty no such thing as organisation for war. It was not in the distribution of business. Lest I should seem to exaggerate, I quote the testimony of the late Sir John Briggs, Reader to the Lords and Chief Clerk of the Admiralty. Referring to the period with which I am dealing, Sir John Briggs writes as follows (*Naval Administrations, 1827 to 1892.*" Sampson Low. 1897):

"During my Admiralty experience of forty-four years, I may safely affirm that no measures were devised, nor no practical arrangements thought out, to meet the numerous duties which devolve upon the Admiralty, and which at once present themselves at the very beginning of a war with a first-class naval Power; on the contrary, there had been unqualified apprehension on the mere rumour of war, especially among the naval members, arising from their consciousness of the inadequacy of the Fleet to meet the various duties it would be required to discharge in such an eventuality."

The fact was that after Trafalgar this country had attained to so supreme a dominance upon all seas, with so high a degree of sea-training acquired in independent commands, that organisation for war was taken for granted. We were living on the Nelson tradition. The change came with the advent of steam, which altered certain essential conditions of sea warfare. The use of steam involved a new organisation. Other nations recognised its necessity. We

did not. Nor was it that the distinguished naval officers composing successive Boards of Admiralty neglected their duty, for organisation for war did not form part of their duty, as they conceived it. Moreover, they were wholly occupied with the vast labour of routine business, which developed upon them when the old Navy Board was abolished. The Navy Board, in the old wars, was charged with the provision of all matters of supply, leaving the Lords Commissioners free to conduct war.

That there existed no department charged with the duty of constantly representing what was required in ships, men, stores, docks, under peace conditions, or what would be required under war conditions, was obvious enough. But in the course of the execution of my duties as junior lord, it immediately became equally clear that the Navy was deficient in those very matters and things concerning which it would have been the business of such a department to report. Among them was coal, which was in my charge. Not only was there an immense deficiency in the war reserve of coal, but there was no plan for supplying it.

What my friends used to call my "craze," which they regarded as an amiable form of lunacy, for organisation for war, showed me that without it, all naval force, though it were twice as powerful, would be practically wasted in the event of emergency.

I went to the First Lord and asked him if it would be in order for me to draw up a memorandum on any subject to be laid before the Board. Lord George Hamilton, with his invariable courtesy, replied that any such paper would be gladly considered.

Within six weeks of my appointment to the Admiralty, I had drawn my Memorandum on War Organisation, calling attention to the necessity of creating a Naval Intelligence Department at the Admiralty.

In that document, it was represented:

1. That although recent events had revealed approximately our deficiencies in the event of war with a second-

rate maritime Power, no measures had been taken to prepare a plan showing how the requirements were to be met.

2. That other countries possessed departments charged with the duty of preparing plans of campaign and of organising their every detail so that they could be instantly carried into execution.

3. That the deficiencies in the numbers of the personnel known to be required, were such and such.

4. That the Medical stores were deficient in such and such respects. (They were kept in bulk, so that in the event of war, the medical stores would have had to be selected and distributed: a system I was able to alter.)

5. That there existed no organisation of any kind with regard to the use of merchant shipping in war for the transport of coal, ammunition, and stores, and for hospital ships.

6. That there existed no organisation for rapidly mobilising the reserves.

7. That in order rightly to fulfil these requirements, there must be designed plans of campaign to meet all probable contingencies.

8. That in order to obtain such plans of campaign, there should be created a new department charged with the duty of drawing them up.

There followed a detailed scheme for a new Intelligence Department, at an increased expense of no more than £2251.

The Memorandum concluded as follows:

"1. Can it be denied that the gravest and most certain danger exists to the country if the facts stated in this paper are true?

"2. Can it be denied that these facts *are* true?

"3. If not, should not *immediate steps* be taken to minimise the danger?"

The Memorandum was laid before the Board. My colleagues came to the unanimous conclusion that my statements were exaggerated; and also that, as a junior, I was

meddling with high matters which were not my business; as indeed I was. Having been thus defeated, I asked the permission of Lord George Hamilton to show the Memorandum to Lord Salisbury, and received it.

Lord Salisbury very kindly read the document then and there from beginning to end. He pointed out to me that, on the face of it, I lacked the experience required to give force to my representations, and that I had not even commanded a ship of war in a Fleet.

"You must have more experience, on the face of it," he repeated.

And he observed that, practically, what I was asking him to do, was to set my opinion above the opinion of my senior officers at the Admiralty, and their predecessors.

I replied that, since he put the matter in that way, although it might sound egotistical, I did ask him to do that very thing; but I begged him, before deciding that I was in the wrong, to consult with three admirals, whom I named.

A week later, I saw Lord Salisbury again. He told me that in my main contentions, I was right; that he was sure I should be glad to hear that the three admirals had agreed with them; and that the Board of Admiralty had decided to form a new department upon the lines I had suggested.

The new Naval Intelligence Department was then formed.

The Director was Captain William H. Hall. His assistants were Captain R. N. Custance (now Admiral Sir Reginald N. Custance, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.) and Captain S. M. Eardley-Wilmot (now Rear-Admiral Sir S. M. Eardley-Wilmot).

There was already in existence a Foreign Intelligence Committee, whose business it was to collect information concerning the activities of foreign naval Powers. In my scheme the new department was an extension of the Foreign Intelligence Committee, which was to form Section 1, while

the duties of Section 2 were "To organise war preparations, including naval mobilisation and the making out of plans for naval campaigns to meet all the contingencies considered probable in a war with different countries, corrected frequently and periodically." The whole of the department was to be placed under an officer of flag rank; a part of my recommendations which was not carried into effect until 1912, when the War Staff was instituted at the Admiralty.

It will be observed that, although I designated the new department the Intelligence Department, it was in fact planned to combine Intelligence duties proper with the duties of a War Staff. What I desired was a department which reported "frequently and periodically" upon requirements. But as it was impossible to know what those requirements would be without plans of campaign which specified them, the same department was charged with the duty of designing such plans.

In the result, that particular and inestimably important office was gradually dropped. The department became an Intelligence Department alone. The First Sea Lord was charged with the duty of preparation and organisation for war. After various changes in the distribution of business, it was again discovered that there was no organisation for war; that the First Sea Lord, though (as I said in 1886) he had a head as big as a battleship, could not accomplish the work by himself; and a War Staff, affiliated to the Intelligence Department, was constituted in 1912.

In other words, twenty-six years elapsed before my scheme was carried into full execution.

On the 13th October, 1886, the substance of my confidential Memorandum on Organisation for War was published in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It was stolen from the Admiralty by an Admiralty messenger, who was employed by both the First Sea Lord and myself. The contents of several other confidential documents having been published, suspicion fell upon the messenger, and a snare was laid for

him. An electric contact was made with a certain drawer in the desk of the First Sea Lord, communicating with an alarm in another quarter of the building. Upon leaving his room, the First Sea Lord told the messenger to admit no one during his absence, as he had left unlocked a drawer containing confidential documents. A little after, the alarm rang, and the messenger was discovered seated at the desk, making a copy of the documents in question. He was arrested, brought to trial, and sentenced.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

## THE TWENTY-ONE MILLION

IN January, 1887, my routine work at the Admiralty was varied by a trip in the new submarine *Nautilus* to the bottom of Tilbury Dock, which was very nearly the last voyage of the party in this world. The owners of the boat, Mr. Edward Wolseley and Mr. C. E. Lyon, had invited several guests, among whom was Mr. William White (afterwards Sir William Henry White, K.C.B., F.R.S., etc.), together with some officials of the Admiralty. The theory was that by pushing air cylinders to project from each side of the boat, her buoyancy would be so increased that she would rise to the surface. We sank gently to the bottom and stayed there. The cylinders were pushed out, and still we remained there. I was looking through the glass scuttle, and, although in a submarine the motion or rising or sinking is not felt by those within, I knew that we had not moved, because I could see that the muddy particles suspended in the water remained stationary. The Thames mud had us fast. In this emergency, I suggested rolling her by moving the people quickly from side to side. The expedient succeeded, none too soon; for by the time she came to the surface, the air was very foul.

During the same month, Mr. William White, Chief Constructor to the Admiralty, read a paper at the Mansion House dealing with the design of modern men-of-war, which marked an era in shipbuilding. Sir William White restored to the ship of war that symmetry and beauty of design which

had been lost during the transition from sails to steam. The transition vessels were nightmares. Sir William White designed ships. A man of genius, of a refined and beautiful nature, a loyal servant of the Admiralty, to which he devoted talents which, applied outside the Service, would have gained him wealth, his recent death was a great loss to his country. The later Victorian Navy is his splendid monument: and it may yet be that history will designate those noble ships as the finest type of steam vessels of war.

About the same time, I brought forward another motion in the House of Commons, to abolish obsolete vessels, of which I specified fifty-nine, and to utilise the money saved in their maintenance, in new construction. The scheme was carried into execution by degrees.

In June of 1887, I invited a large party of members of the House of Commons to visit Portsmouth, where they were shown something of the Navy.

In December of the same year, speaking in public, I affirmed the following principles: that in time of war our frontiers were the ports of the enemy; that our main fleets could be required to watch those ports; and that the strength of the Fleet required should be calculated upon the basis of the work it would be required to perform. I also urged that the line of communications should be instituted, by means of establishing a system of signalling between the ships of the Navy and the ships of the mercantile marine, and between all ships and the shore. At that time there was no such system.

The Press and the public received the exposition of these elementary principles of organisation for war as a complete novelty; by many they were welcomed like a revelation; circumstances which exemplify the general ignorance prevailing at the time.

Of even more significance were the official declarations on the subject. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord George Hamilton, had publicly stated in November, 1886, that this country had more ships in commission than the

three other European Naval Powers next in order of strength. The statement was correct; but among the ships in commission were included many vessels of no fighting value, such as the *Indus*, *Asia* and *Duke of Wellington*. As an estimate of comparative fighting strength, the statement, like many another official statement before and since, required qualification; as I remarked in the House of Commons in the course of my reply to Lord George Hamilton.

In December, 1886, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Randolph Churchill, suddenly resigned. He afterwards explained that his resignation was a protest against extravagance and waste in the administration of the Services. There were extravagance and waste; but, in my view, which I represented to Lord Randolph, it would take several years to reform the administration, and it was far more important to set right our defences, even if their administration cost more in the meantime.

I recall these things because they serve to illustrate the trend of events. On the one side were the Government and their official advisers at the Admiralty, convinced that all was very well as it was. On the other side, were the rapid development of the fighting ship in all countries, which, owing to Mr. W. H. White, was particularly marked in this country; the greatly increased public interest in naval affairs; and the constant representations of a number of naval officers, myself among them, to the effect that great reforms were urgently required.

We believed that there existed at the Board of Admiralty no system of direct responsibility; that Parliament and the nation had no means either of ascertaining upon what principle the money was expended upon our defences, or of affixing responsibility whether it were expended ill or well; that there existed no plan of campaign at the Admiralty; that the Navy and the Army had no arrangement for working together in the event of war; and that, in point of fact, the Navy was dangerously inadequate. And in attempting to achieve reform, we were confronted

by a solid breastwork, as though built of bales of wool, of official immovability. Had it been a hard obstacle, we might have smashed it.

Towards the end of 1887, the Admiralty did a very foolish thing. They decided to cut down the salaries of the officers of the new Intelligence Department by £950. In my view, this proceeding both involved a breach of faith with the officers concerned, and would be highly injurious to the efficiency of the department for whose success I felt peculiarly responsible. My protests were, however, disregarded; the First Lord asserted his supreme authority; and the thing was done.

The efficiency of the whole Service was, in my view, bound up with the efficiency of the Intelligence Department; because that department was created for the express purpose of estimating and reporting what was required to enable the Navy to fulfil its duties. It was in view of the main question of the necessity of strengthening the Fleet, that I decided to resign my position upon the Board of Admiralty, and to declare publicly my reasons for so doing. On the 9th January, 1888, I sent my resignation to Lord Salisbury; who, courteously expressing his regret, accepted it on 18th January.

In making my decision to take this extreme action, I was influenced by the conviction that nothing short of the resignation of a member of the Board of Admiralty would induce the authorities to reorganise and strengthen our defences. Whether or not I was right in that belief, I do not know to this day; but, as the strengthening of the Fleet was shortly afterwards carried into execution in precise accordance with my recommendations, there is some evidence in my favour. My constituents in East Marylebone were strongly adverse to my course of action. Many of my friends begged me not to resign. General Buller, in particular, pointed out to me that no good was ever done by an officer resigning his post, because the officer who resigned ceased by his own act to occupy the position which entitled

him to a hearing. I daresay he was right. At any rate, I was well aware that I was jeopardising my whole career. For an officer to resign his seat upon the Board of Admiralty in order to direct public attention to abuses, is to commit, officially speaking, the unpardonable sin. When, three or four years later, Sir Frederick Richards, the First Sea Lord, threatened to resign if the Government would not accept his shipbuilding programme, although I am certain he would have pursued exactly the same course had he stood alone, he had the support of the rest of the Board. I had the rest of the Sea Lords against me. That is a different affair. A united Board of Admiralty can generally in the last resort prevail against the Government. A single member of that Board who attempts the same feat, knows, at least, that never again will he be employed at the Admiralty. But when Sir Frederick Richards and his colleagues threatened resignation, they were in fact risking the loss of employment and incurring the possibility of spending the rest of their lives in comparative penury. A later Liberal administration has dismissed one Naval Lord after another, without a scruple.

In my case, I had the advantage of possessing a private income, so that I was independent of the Service as a means of livelihood. It is necessary to speak plainly upon this matter of resignation. It is most unfair to expect naval officers to resign in the hope of bringing about reform, when by so doing their income is greatly reduced. If the British public desire it to be understood that a Sea Lord is expected to resign should the Government in power fail to make what he believes to be the necessary provision for the national security, then the public must insist that the Sea Lords be granted an ample retiring allowance.

In the following February (1888) Lord George Hamilton made a speech at Ealing, in which he dealt with my protests in the most courteous manner. He stated that I had resigned because I objected to the exercise of the supreme authority of the First Lord over the Board of Admiralty. I had certainly objected to its exercise in a particular instance.

And at that time I was constantly urging that Parliament and the country had a right to know who was responsible for the actions of the Admiralty. My theory was that there should be some means by which Parliament and the public should be assured that any given course of action was founded upon professional advice. That no such means existed was notorious. It was within the legal right of a First Lord to announce a policy contravening or modifying the views of the rest of the Board.

My view was, and is, the view tersely stated by Admiral Phipps Hornby, who said that it was the right of the Cabinet to formulate a policy, and that it was the duty of the Sea Lords to provide what was required in order to carry that policy into execution; but that the Cabinet had no right whatever to dictate to the Sea Lords in what the provision should consist, for that was a matter of which the Sea Lords alone were competent to judge.

But if the Board of Admiralty be placed under the supreme jurisdiction of the First Lord, a civilian and a politician, the country has no means of knowing whether or no the recommendations of the Sea Lords are being carried into execution. I said at the time that some such means should be instituted; afterwards, perceiving that no such demand would be granted, I urged that the Cabinet at least ought to be precisely informed what were the requirements stated by the Sea Lords to be necessary in order to carry into execution the policy of the Government.

In claiming supreme authority as First Lord over the Board of Admiralty, Lord George Hamilton was legally and constitutionally in the right. The Royal Commission on the administration of the Navy and Army, over which Lord Hartington presided, reported in 1890 (when I was at sea) that the Admiralty had long ceased to be administered in accordance with the terms of its original Patent, and that "the present system of administration in the Admiralty is the result of Parliamentary action upon what was once in fact as well as name an executive and administrative

Board. The responsibility, and consequently the power of the First Lord has continually increased, and he is at present practically the Minister of Marine." In other words, by slow degrees the politician had transferred the powers of the Board to himself, where they remain; the other members of the Board becoming merely his advisers. The result is that there is nothing, except the personal influence of the Naval Lords upon the First Lord, to prevent the Navy from being governed in accordance with party politics, without reference to national and Imperial requirements; a system which produces intermittent insecurity and periodical panics involving extravagant expense.

The Commissioners also found that there was a difference of opinion among the Naval Lords themselves concerning their responsibility with regard to the strength and efficiency of the Fleet. It was, in a word, nobody's business to state what were the requirements of the Fleet. The First Lord might ask for advice, if he chose, in which case he would get it. If he did not so choose, there was no one whose duty it was to make representations on the subject. Admiral Sir Arthur Hood stated that never in the whole course of his experience had he known a scheme comprehending the naval requirements of the Empire to be laid before the Board. He also stated that the method of preparing the Navy Estimates was that the First Lord stated what sum the Cabinet felt disposed to grant for the Navy, and that the Naval Lords then proceeded to get as much value for their money as they could.

No wonder the Sea Lords were expected to sign the Estimates without looking at them. When I was junior lord, responsible for the provision of coal and stores among other trifles, a clerk came into my room with a sheaf of papers in one hand and a wet quill pen in the other.

"Will you sign the Estimates?" says he.

"What?" said I.

"Will you sign the Estimates for the year?" he repeated.

"My good man," I said, "I haven't seen them."

The clerk looked mildly perturbed. He said:

"The other Lords have signed them, sir. It will be very inconvenient if you do not."

"I am very sorry," said I. "I am afraid I am inconvenient in this office already. But I certainly shall not sign the Estimates."

The clerk's countenance betrayed consternation.

"I must tell the First Lord, sir," said he, as one who presents an ultimatum.

"I don't care a fig whom you tell," said I. "I can't sign the Estimates, because I have not read them."

Nor did I sign them. They were brought before the House of Commons without my signature. The First Lord said it did not really matter. My point was that I would not take responsibility for a document I had not seen. The fact was, that the custom of obtaining the signatures of the Board is a survival of the time when the Sea Lords wielded the power and responsibility conferred upon them by the original Patent.

The Commissioners also reported that the lack of "sufficient provision for the consideration by either Service of the wants of the other" . . . was an "unsatisfactory and dangerous condition of affairs."

Here, then, were all the points for which my brother officers and myself were contending, and in order to illuminate which I had resigned, explicitly admitted. But the proofs did not appear until a year after my resignation took effect, when the Select Committee on the Navy Estimates began to take evidence; nor were they published for another year.

In the meantime, the naval reformers fought as best they might. Freed from the restraint necessarily imposed upon me by my official position at the Admiralty, I was able to devote my whole energies to making known the real state of affairs.

Upon the introduction of the Navy Estimates of 1888–9 I challenged the votes for shipbuilding, the Secretary's

Department, the Intelligence Department, the Reserve of merchant cruisers, the Royal Naval Reserve and naval armaments, in order to call attention to requirements.

In the course of the debates, the official formula was: "At no time was the Navy more ready or better organised for any work which it might be called upon to do than to-day." My reply was that these words "have rung in our ears as often as the tune 'Britannia rules the waves,' and have been invariably falsified when war appeared imminent." And who would have to do the work? The officials who said that all was ready, or the admirals who said that all was unready?

In May, a meeting to consider the needs of national defence was held in the City, at which I delivered an address. Speaking at the Lord Mayor's banquet in November, the First Lord admitted that there might be room for improvement in the Navy. It was a dangerous, if a candid, admission. For if the Navy were not strong enough, *how weak was it?*

Exactly how weak it was in June, 1888, in the opinion of the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Arthur Hood, was explained by him before the Select Committee on Navy Estimates (13th June, 1888). "I should have preferred by the end of 1890 to have had six more fast cruisers. I do not consider it a point of vital importance," said Admiral Hood.

But as, upon his own showing, within his recollection no one at the Admiralty had ever produced a scheme comprehending the naval requirements of the Empire, his view was hardly conclusive. I had the audacity to consider that if no one had ever attempted, or thought of attempting, to estimate the requirements of the naval defence of the Queen's dominions, it was time that some one did attempt to do so, even if that some one were myself. Accordingly, I made a careful calculation of the work the Fleet might under probable contingencies be required to perform, and upon that calculation based an estimate of the classes and numbers of ships which would be needed.

I showed my estimate to Admiral Hornby, who said that, although the ships were absolutely necessary, I was asking too much and I should in consequence get nothing. He also pointed out that I had made no provision for the increase of personnel required to man the proposed new ships. I replied that if the ships were laid down, the authorities would be obliged to find the men for them. The sequel showed that I was wrong and that Admiral Hornby was right. He knew his responsible authority better than I did. Six years later, when what should have been the increased personnel would have been trained and available, the Fleet was short of 20,000 men.

My cousin, General Sir Reginald Talbot, reminds me of a conversation which befell between Mr. Goschen, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and myself, in November of the same year, 1888, when we were staying at Wilton, the house of my cousin, Lady Pembroke. Mr. Goschen began to talk about the Navy, and he was so good as to express high disapproval of my course of action. He said I was doing a great deal of harm, that I was presuming to set my rash opinion above the considered judgment of old and distinguished officers who had commanded ships before I was born, and so forth.

"Do you know what I am shortly going to propose to Parliament?" said I. "No? I'll tell you. I am going to ask for seventy ships to cost twenty million sterling."

Mr. Goschen became really angry. He said the notion was preposterous.

"You won't get them," he said. "You wouldn't get even three ships, if you asked for them. And for a very simple reason. They are not wanted."

"Mr. Goschen," said I, "I shall bring in that programme, and it will cost twenty million; and you will all object to it and oppose it; and yet I'll venture to make a prophecy. Before very long you will order seventy ships at the cost of twenty million. And for a very simple reason. Because you must."

to lay before the House a larger and more comprehensive programme than was provided by the current estimates, "desiring that when they moved their movement should be genuine and prolonged."

Twelve weeks later, Lord George Hamilton brought in a shipbuilding programme consisting of 70 vessels, to be built at a cost of £21,500,000.

Yet nothing had happened since the previous June, when Sir Arthur Hood declared that he would have preferred six more cruisers, but that they were not of vital importance?

Nothing, that is to say, with regard to the international situation, and the increase of foreign navies, and the requirements of Imperial defence. But several things had happened at home. Of the most important of these, I knew nothing until many years afterwards. It was that Captain W. H. Hall, Director of the new Intelligence Department, whose institution I had recommended for this very purpose, had worked out the problem of naval requirements independently, and, with all the sources of information available in the Admiralty at his command, had arrived at precisely the same result (except for an increase of cost) as that to which I had arrived, without the information possessed by Captain Hall. I may mention here that Captain Hall was a most distinguished and patriotic officer, with whom no considerations of personal interest ever weighed for an instant against what he conceived to be his duty to his Sovereign and to his country. What happened at the Admiralty when his report was laid before the Board, I do not know, as I never had any communication with Captain Hall on the subject. All I know is that his scheme, which was identical with the scheme which I had presented to the House, was accepted by the First Lord.

Another circumstance which may have influenced the Government was the very remarkable evidence, which I have already summarised, given before the Select Committee on the Navy Estimates. And another factor, of enduring import, was the famous Report of the Three Admirals:

Admiral Sir William Dowell, K.C.B., Admiral Sir R. Vesey Hamilton, K.C.B., and Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Richards, K.C.B., on the Naval Manœuvres of 1888, presented to both Houses of Parliament in February, 1889. Sir Frederick Richards was mainly responsible for drawing up that masterly document, which, extending beyond its terms of reference, formulated the principles of British sea-power; and definitely affirmed the absolute necessity for establishing and maintaining the Two-Power Standard.

With reference to the condition of the Navy at the time, the Three Admirals reported that the Navy was "altogether inadequate to take the offensive in a war with only one Great Power"; and that "supposing a combination of even two Powers to be allied as her enemies, the balance of maritime strength would be against England."

How swiftly is the false coin of "official assurances" consumed by the acid of professional knowledge! The whole episode of the Twenty-One Million is so typical of the methods of British governance, that I have thought it worth while to relate it somewhat at length. Those methods, in a word, consist in the politicians very nearly losing the Empire, and the Navy saving it just in time. The same thing happened all over again in 1892. It occurred again 1909, with a difference. Both in 1892 and in 1909 I drew up shipbuilding proposals. In 1892, the Government eventually adopted the Spencer programme, which was actually larger than mine. In 1909, the opportunity of restoration was lost; and the failure cost, and will cost, the country many millions.

One of these days we shall be hit, and hit hard, at the moment when the politicians have been found out, and before the Navy has had time to recover.

Something to this effect was said to me by Bismarck, when I visited him, in February, 1889. In truth, I had a little wearied of the polite and stubborn opposition of my own people, and I went to Berlin to see what was happening abroad. Prince Bismarck invited me to lunch.

Bismarck said that he could not understand why my own people did not listen to me (nor could I !); for (said he) the British Fleet was the greatest factor for peace in Europe. We had a most interesting conversation upon matters of defence and preparation for war; and his tone was most friendly towards the English. He very kindly presented me with his signed photograph. I stayed with him for two hours; and we drank much beer; and all the time his gigantic boar-hound, lying beside him, stared fixedly at me with a red and lurid eye.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

## H.M.S. *UNDAUNTED*

### I. With the Mediterranean Fleet

"Undaunteds be ready,
Undaunteds be steady,
Undaunteds stand by for a job!"
Bugle call of H.M.S. *Undaunted*

IT was invented by the first lieutenant, William Stokes Rees (now Vice-Admiral W. S. Rees, C.B.), who was one of the best gunnery officers I have known. I was appointed to the command of the *Undaunted* in November, 1889. The commander was Robert S. Lowry (now Vice-Admiral Sir Robert S. Lowry, K.C.B.). It was the *Undaunted's* first commission. She was a twin-screw, first-class armoured cruiser of 5600 tons displacement and 8500 h.p., ordered to join the Mediterranean Fleet, under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Anthony H. Hoskins, K.C.B. He was succeeded in September, 1891, by my old friend, Admiral Sir George Tryon, K.C.B., whose tragic death was so great a loss to the Service and to the country.

The first essential of good discipline is to make officers and men as happy and as comfortable as the exigencies of the Service permit. I believe that the *Undaunted* was a happy ship; I know that the loyalty, enthusiasm and hard work of the officers and men under my command earned her a good record.

In every vessel there are improvements to be made which, perhaps trifling in themselves, greatly add to the

welfare of the officers and ship's company. At that time, for instance, the arrangements for the stokers were so bad, that there was only one bath available for twenty men. My recommendation was that tubs of galvanised iron should be supplied, fitting one into another in nests, so that the extra baths occupied less space than the one regulation bath. I also had lockers of lattice-work supplied for the stokers' dirty clothing, instead of closed and insanitary lockers. It is true that at first the men objected to the open-work, because their pipes dropped through it. Again, the hatchway ladders were made with sharp nosings, against which the men injured their legs; and I suggested that these should be formed with rounded nosings instead. A ship of war is naturally uncomfortable; but why make it unnecessarily disagreeable? At that time, too, the rate of second-class petty officer did not exist among the stokers. The result was that if a leading stoker was disrated he was reduced to stoker. For this reason, I urged the institution of the rate of second-class petty officer stoker, a reform which was eventually instituted. Some years afterwards, the rate of second-class officer was abolished altogether, a retrograde measure which I believe to be injurious.

When a petty officer loses his rate in consequence of a mistake or a lapse, he should be enabled to recover it by good behaviour.

One of my countrymen on board, whom we will call Patrick, an able seaman of long service, perpetually failed to attain to the rating of petty officer owing to his weakness for strong waters. In other respects he was admirably qualified to rise. I sent for him, told him I would give him a chance, and made him a second-class petty officer. I believe that he succumbed once or twice, and that the commander let him off. But one fine day Patrick returned on board from leave ashore, fully attired—cap, coat, boots and socks—with the single exception of his trousers. The case having been officially reported to me, I had up the delinquent before the assembled petty officers. I made it a rule

not to disrate a petty officer in the presence of the ship's company.

The charge having been duly read, I asked Patrick what he had to say on the subject.

"Do you moind now, sir," says Pat, "that I was drunk the same day last year?"

I told him I did not remember anything of the sort.

"Well, sir," continued Patrick, unabashed, "to tell you the truth, 'tis my mother's birthday, and I had a drop of drink taken."

I told him that it was impossible to allow petty officers to disgrace the ship by coming on board without their trousers; that I should take away his petty officer's rate, but that I would leave him his badges.

He had three badges. Had he lost them, he would have lost his badge pay during a period of six months for each badge, so that it would take him eighteen months of "very good" conduct to regain them. In addition, he would have lost the good conduct medal, a part of his pension and a part of his gratuity on leaving the Service. The severity of the punishment in comparison with what is not perhaps a serious offence, is not always recognised by authority.

"May I say a word to you, sir?" asked Patrick, having received his sentence.

"You can say what you like," said I, "but I am afraid it won't save your rate."

"Well, sir," says he, "'tis this way, sir. If you'll think over it the way it is, I was fourteen years getting th' rate, and you'll be takin' it away from me in one moment."

Pat used to delight his audiences at the ship's concerts. He sang among other beautiful legends, the Irish ditty, "Brannagan's Pup." He led upon the stage my bull-dog, who came very sulkily. It never could be (as Pat would have said) that the concertina accompaniment began when he began. When the concertina started ahead of him, Pat shifted the bull-dog's leash to his other hand, put his hand to the side of his mouth, and staring straight upon the

audience, uttered the following stage direction in a furious whisper which was heard all over the ship.

"Don't you shtart that ruddy pump till I hould up me hand!"

Some years after I had left the *Undaunted*, arriving in a P. and O. steamer off a Chinese port, I semaphored to a man-of-war asking the captain to send me a boat, as I wished to have the pleasure of calling upon him. The coxswain of the captain's boat was no other than my old friend.

"I'm very glad to see you've kept the rate," said I. "I suppose you run straight now and keep clear of liquor?"

"Well, sir," says Paddy, "to tell you the truth, I've taken an odd toss or two since I saw you, but I've got it back again!"

He meant that he had been disrated again once or twice but had won back his rate again; indeed, he had won it back while under my command. I always told my men that if they were tried by court-martial—as the men now desire to be tried—it would go harder with them. Had Patrick been tried by court-martial, it is very unlikely that he would have got back his rate; and his deprivation, being endorsed upon his certificate, would have affected his chance of gaining employment in civil life upon leaving the Service.

I had a case of a man who, because he put his helm over the wrong way, ran into another boat, with the result that a man was drowned. The culprit was disrated; but I gave him his rate again before I left the ship. It is the personal knowledge of a man possessed by his captain which alone enables his captain to make distinctions. A court-martial must judge of the offence without personal knowledge of the character of the offender.

I had a sergeant of Marines, a man with an excellent record, a strict disciplinarian, popular among his men, who, within nine months of the expiration of his time, came aboard blind drunk and disorderly. The penalty was to be reduced to the ranks. But it is often forgotten what under

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

in-chief, Sir Anthony Hoskins. He considered the point of importance, but held that it was a matter rather for the constructor than the seaman, a view with which I did not agree.

Sir Anthony Hoskins, who was about to haul down his flag, turned the letter over to Sir George Tryon, who sent it to the Admiralty. The Admiralty, I believe, considered that, under certain conditions, the theory was correct.

Those conditions occurred on 22nd June, 1893, when the *Victoria* was rammed by the *Camperdown* off Beyrout. The *Camperdown* struck the flagship on the starboard bow, and in ten minutes she had capsized and sunk. As the *Victoria* was carrying her scuttles open, and received an injury equivalent to the damage which would be inflicted by a large shell, the conditions of an action, in which the hull would be pierced with many small holes and further wounded by heavy projectiles, were produced, with the result whose probability, if not certainty, I had indicated.

In dealing with this subject, I also represented that the French ships of the period, having a powerful fore and aft fire, might choose in time of war to fight a retreating action, in which case they could so damage the unarmoured ends of our vessels, that our vessels could not be steered, and, being forced to ease speed, would be placed at a serious disadvantage.

The *Hecla*, torpedo school ship in the Mediterranean, was commanded by my old friend, Captain John Durnford (now Admiral Sir John Durnford, K.C.B., D.S.O.). Together with the officers under my command, I attended the torpedo classes on board.

Captain Durnford accompanied me in the *Undaunted* when we conducted experiments in the dropping of mines. The mines were the clever invention of Lieutenant Ottley (now Rear-Admiral Sir Charles C. Ottley, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.V.O.). By means of an ingenious mechanical contrivance, they sank themselves to the required depth. We designed and constructed the dropping gear, rigging it abaft the propellers. The mines were dropped by hand, the ship

steaming at 18 knots. A certain area was fixed within which the mines were to be sown. We steamed across it at night, in thick darkness, along a narrow channel. Unable to take bearings, as the position of the scattered lights on shore was unknown, we sent out two boats carrying lights. We touched the ground once, the shock throwing Captain Durnford and myself against the rail. In four minutes all the mines were dropped without a single mistake. The experiment was also carried into execution in daylight. In those days there were no mine-laying vessels, and the *Undaunted* was somewhat of a pioneer in the science of mining waters at full speed.

My experience while in office at the Admiralty had led me profoundly to suspect (among other things) the adequacy of the provision for reserve ammunition. And upon making inquiries at Malta, I found that if the *Undaunted* in the event of war had expended the whole of her ammunition, the renewal of the supply for her main armament of 6-inch guns would (excluding practice ammunition) exhaust the whole reserve supply. There were no spare guns in reserve at all. My representations on the subject were by no means gratefully received by the Admiralty, which considered that the supply of reserve ammunition and guns was not the business of a captain. I suggested that the ammunition papers should go to every captain; an arrangement which was afterwards carried into execution. At this time I also represented (but in other quarters) the urgent necessity of building a new mole at Gibraltar, which was then not a naval but a military base, although in time of war it would be required to serve as one of the most important naval bases in the world, either for the blue water route or the narrow sea route. My representations were made with the object of inducing the Government to transform Gibraltar from a merely military fortress to a properly equipped naval base. I took soundings and drew out a scheme. The plan eventually adopted was an improvement upon mine.

It is not of course implied that I was alone in urging

these reforms and such as these; there were many patriotic men, both in the Service and outside it, who were engaged in the same endeavour. What I did must be taken to represent the unrequited labours of others as well. Sir George Tryon, my commander-in-chief, that splendid seaman and admirable officer, was always most sympathetic and showed to me the greatest kindness. I am proud to say that I never served under a commander-in-chief with whom I was not upon the best of terms.

Sir George Tryon having received letters from H.H. the Khedive and from the British Minister Plenipotentiary in Egypt, instructed me to proceed to Alexandria with a small squadron. H.H. the Khedive welcomed me with great cordiality, being so kind as to say that I had saved his father's life during the troubles of 1882, when the *Condor* kept guard over the Ramleh Palace. I remained at Alexandria for some time, being senior officer there.

In order to relieve the monotony of sea-routine, the men were landed by companies in the Mex lines, a place with which I had many interesting associations dating from 1882, for rifle practice, sleeping under canvas. The water on shore being undrinkable, the men were ordered to use the distilled water supplied daily from the ship.

Visiting the hospital tent, I thought one of the patients had cholera.

"It looks very like it," said the staff-surgeon.

"Have you been drinking the shore water?" I asked the patient.

He confessed that he had. I asked him why he had done so.

"Please, sir," said he, "the distilled water had no taste in it."

Having arranged with my old friend, Sir William Butler, commanding the garrison at Alexandria, to combine with the soldiers in field exercise, I took a landing-party ashore at Ras-el-Tin. We started early in the morning, embarking the field-guns. The seamen waded ashore with them, and

attacked a position held by the soldiers on the top of the hill. It looked impregnable, the ground being a steep, sandy slope covered with scrub. But the bluejackets dragged the guns up through the sand and bushes. We battled all the morning with great enjoyment; returned on board, and shifted into dry clothes in time for dinner. The benefit of such exercises is that all learn something.

In July, 1891, was held at Alexandria the great regatta, in which 26 boats of all classes were entered, including a cutter from the Portuguese sloop *Fieja* and Arab boats. It was on this occasion that the galley of the *Undaunted* ran upon the breakwater, was knocked into smithereens, and sank. By an extraordinary coincidence, she was an old boat which the Admiralty had persistently refused to replace.

Upon leaving Alexandria, the *Undaunted* touched a rock. We had been helping the contractor to blow up the rocks in the Borghiz Channel (a proceeding for which I was subsequently reproved) and left the harbour steering by stern marks. The staff-commander knew exactly where he was going, but by a slip of the tongue he gave the order "port" instead of "starboard," adding that he wanted to close certain buoys marking the passage. The injury to the ship was very slight, but peculiar. Her bottom was pierced, and a little fish swam into the ship. I have the fish with a small piece broken off the keel by the impact, in a bottle.

In December, 1891, the second annual regatta of the Mediterranean Fleet was held in Marmorice Bay. In the officers' race, I pulled stroke in the galley of the *Undaunted*, in spite of Sir George Tryon's kindly warning that my heart would give way. We beat the *Australia's* boat by about two seconds. In the next race, held the following year, the *Australia* beat us.

There were seventeen ships on the station, and 9000 men. The *Undaunted* won 22 prizes (12 of them, I think, first prizes) out of 29. All her ratings were regularly practised in all her boats, each boat racing against the other. In

order to equalise chances, the boats started in rotation, the time allowance being given at the start, instead of being calculated at the end as in yacht racing, so that the boat first across the line at the end of the course won the race. The launch, being the heaviest boat, started last, manned with four men to the midship oars, three men to the after oars, and two men to the foremost oars. The boats would often all come in together. The enthusiasm of the men was immense.

At that time the island of Crete was in a state of chronic agitation, which culminated in the troubles of 1897, and their suppression by the Council of Admirals, of which Admiral Sir Robert H. Harris, who represented Great Britain with so great ability and resource, gives an excellent account in his book, *From Naval Cadet to Admiral.* In the meantime, Christians and Mohammedans were joyfully shooting one another, while the Turkish garrison endeavoured to keep order by shooting both parties impartially. Riding up from Suda Bay to call upon a certain distinguished Turkish Pasha, an old friend, I passed several corpses, both of Christians and Mohammedans, lying on the roadside.

"Cannot you stop these murders?" I said to the Pasha. "It is really very distressing to see so many dead bodies."

"Yes, Lord," said the Pasha (he always called me Lord). "Very sad, Lord. I am sure you must feel it very much, Lord. It must make you think you are back in your own country."

The retort was apposite enough, for moonlighting was then the joy of Ireland.

Not that the Turkish soldiers neglected musketry practice. Riding up to Canea, I was met by bullets whistling past my head. I pulled off the road, and was joined by an old Turk, who was riding a donkey and carrying a large white umbrella. Presently we perceived a pot placed in the middle of the highway, and then we came upon a party of Turkish soldiers lying in a row and firing at it; whereupon the aged Turk climbed from his donkey, rolled up his umbrella, and belaboured the soldiers with it.

I once asked my friend the Pasha why he had not ere then been promoted.

"I do not know, Lord. The Government does not know. God Almighty does not know. Even his Imperial Majesty the Sultan does not know!" quoth the Pasha.

The *Undaunted* visited Sorrento in 1891, when Lord Dufferin was staying there. None who had the privilege of his acquaintance will need to be reminded of the singular charm of a talented, witty and urbane personality. Lord Dufferin had the unconscious art of impressing upon those whom he met that he had been waiting all his life for that moment. The small sailing yacht, *Lady Hermione*, which he kept at Sorrento, was a marvel of ingenious contrivance. She was a decked boat, with a well into which the ropes and gear were led and were attached to all sorts of levers, tackles and winches, to enable her to be sailed single-handed. Lord Dufferin, accompanied by Lady Dufferin, frequently sailed her in the Bay of Naples. On one such voyage, wishing to tauten up the peak halliards, he told Lady Dufferin to heave upon a certain lever. She seized the wrong handle, and away went the anchor with 130 fathoms of chain, which ran out to the clinch. Then the rest of the equipment became really useful, Lord Dufferin rigging up purchase on purchase with it, and so heaving up the anchor. After four hours' incessant toil he succeeded in getting it berthed, and returned in a state of exhaustion.

The *Lady Hermione* persuaded Lord Dufferin to learn Morse and semaphore. She was moored at the foot of the cliff, beneath Lord Dufferin's hotel, from whose balcony he used to shout his orders for the day to the boy who was in charge of her, and who often misunderstood his instructions. I suggested that he should learn to communicate with his ship's company by signal, and drew up both the Morse and semaphore codes for his benefit. In six weeks he sent letters to me written in both codes; an instance of determined application. During that time he insisted on practising for so many hours every day with his wife and daughter, so

that at the end of it the whole family were proficient in signals.

An interesting example of the manœuvres of those days occurred at Volo, when Captain Wilson, V.C., disguised his ship, the *Sanspareil*, in olive trees. The *Undaunted* was told off to make a torpedo attack at night in the narrow channel where lay the *Sanspareil*. Captain Wilson (now Admiral of the Fleet Sir A. K. Wilson, V.C., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O.) had constructed a dummy ship on the side of the channel opposite to which lay the *Sanspareil*, completely clothed in olive trees. I sent a midshipman to cut the cable of the searchlight playing upon the entrance to the channel. The *Undaunted* steamed into the channel, discovered first the wrong ship, and then the right one, at which I discharged two torpedoes, which were found next morning under the bottom of the *Sanspareil*.

At the conclusion of all manœuvres, Sir George Tryon invariably gave a critical lecture upon them to his officers; a method which I adopted in later years. No practice can be more useful; for, while the events are fresh in mind, it demonstrates what was wrong, and why. Often what looks wrong at first, turns out to have been a good idea. But for years all reports of manœuvres remained locked in the Admiralty. Many of the manœuvres were useless; but for lack of information admirals afloat continued to repeat them.

During my time in the *Undaunted*, my knowledge of signalling saved Captain Harry Rawson (afterwards Vice-Admiral Sir H. H. Rawson, K.C.B.) and myself a deal of trouble on one occasion. We had been out shooting all day, had missed the way, and as darkness fell, found ourselves on the wrong side of the bay in which the Fleet lay at anchor, with the prospect of a further tramp of twelve or fourteen miles. Rawson used to chaff me for doing what he called "boatswain's work."

"You always want," he used to say, "to go down to the store-room and cut off 30 fathoms of rope yourself."

To which I used to reply that I wanted to do nothing of

the sort; but what I did want to do was to see that a piece of 30 fathoms of rope *was* cut off. On the same principle, Rawson used to deride my acquaintance with signals. Now that we either had to attract the attention of the Fleet or walk for another three or four hours, I told Rawson that if I could find a shepherd's hut I would get a boat over. He did not believe me.

But we found a hut, and in the hut, an oil lamp and a bucket, out of which I constructed a signalling apparatus. I had hardly made the *Undaunted* pennant, when it was answered from the ship, and inside a quarter of an hour the boat waiting for us on the other side of the bay had been recalled, and another boat was rapidly approaching us. Rawson left off chaffing me after that.

It was at this time that my old friend, Captain Gerard Noel (now Admiral of the Fleet Sir G. H. U. Noel, G.C.B., K.C.M.G.), one of the smartest seamen in the Service, performed a brilliant feat of seamanship. Captain Noel commanded the twin-screw, rigged ironclad *Téméraire*, of 8540 tons displacement, one of the types in which sail-power was employed as well as steam. She was brig-rigged, and I think her main-yard measured 104 feet, or about four feet longer than the main-yards of the sailing line-of-battleships of, say, 1850–60. On the 3rd October, 1890, Captain Noel beat her under sail alone against a head wind up Suda Bay, a long narrow arm of the sea, with shoal water in places, which added to the difficulty of handling the ship. If I am not mistaken, that occasion was the first and last time an ironclad beat her way under sail into an anchorage. The *Téméraire* made thirteen tacks and anchored within two cables (400 yards) of her appointed berth with the Fleet. By that time the wind had failed and it was useless to attempt to tack again.

It was early in the commission of the *Undaunted* that I read Captain (now Admiral) A. T. Mahan's admirable book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*; of which it is not too much to say that it has changed the whole trend of

modern thought in respect of the relation of sea warfare to land warfare. Preparation for war now turns upon a new pivot. The result has been that extraordinary increase of foreign navies which necessarily imposes upon us a proportionate increase of our own Navy. I was so greatly impressed with the work of Captain Mahan, that I wrote to him to express my admiration for it. I received in reply the interesting letter which follows, and which Admiral Mahan has kindly permitted me to quote:

"75, EAST 54TH STREET, NEW YORK
*7th February*, 1891

"DEAR LORD CHARLES BERESFORD,—I thank you very much for your letter, which was received a few days since. The reception my book has had on your side of the water has been very grateful to me. Commendation is pleasant, but there has been a degree of thoughtful appreciation in England, both by the Press and naval officers which has exceeded my expectations and, I fear, the deserts of the work. That it will produce any effect upon our people is unlikely; too many causes concur to prevent a recognition of the truth that even the most extensive countries need to make themselves outside. After our own, nothing will give me greater pleasure than that it should contribute in your country to a sense of your vital interest in this matter. Your naval officers have an inducement to study those great questions which is almost wanting in ours; for if your Fleet is not all that you could wish, you still have some instruments to work with, a force superior to any other if not adequate to all your needs, and the inadequacy can be greatly remedied by judicious and careful planning and preparation.

". . . The number and dissemination of your external interests throws England largely on the defensive, necessarily so. It was so in the great days of Pitt and Nelson, though the fact is obscured by the great naval preponderance you then had. You have now greater and more extensive interests to defend. . . .—Believe me to be, very truly yours,

"A. T. MAHAN"

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### H.M.S. *UNDAUNTED* (*Continued*)

### II. THE SALVING OF THE *SEIGNELAY*

THE *Undaunted*, lying at Alexandria in 1891, was being rigged up for a ball; when a telegram arrived ordering her to go to the rescue of the French cruiser *Seignelay*, which had gone ashore near Jaffa, on 26th April. The telegram arrived at one o'clock in the morning of the 28th April. Before daylight, the ball-room was unrigged, the decorations were taken down, 300 guests were put off by telegram, and we were steaming at full speed to the *Seignelay*, distant 270 miles. In a private letter printed in *The Times* of 20th October, 1894, describing the affair, the anonymous writer says: "It was a good sample of the vicissitudes of naval life, and I think we all rather enjoyed it." (I do not know who wrote the letter, but it must have been one of my officers; who, without my knowledge, published it, or sanctioned its publication, more than a year after the *Undaunted* had paid off. The proprietors of *The Times* have kindly given me permission to quote from the document, which was written at the time of the occurrence of the events which it describes, and which contains details I had forgotten.)

At daylight on 29th April, we found the *Seignelay* driven high up on a sandy beach, embedded in five and a half feet of sand in shallow water. She had parted her cable in a gale of wind, had driven on shore, and had scooped out a dock for herself. Had she been built with a round stern,

each succeeding wave of the sea would have lifted and then dropped her, bumping her to pieces. But as she had a sharp stern, the breakers lifted her bodily and floated her farther on. The *Seignelay* was a single-screw wooden cruiser, of 1900 tons displacement and 18 feet 4 inches draught. When his ship struck, the captain telegraphed to his admiral saying that he feared she was hopelessly lost. The French admiral dispatched a squadron of three ships to take off the men and stores; but by the time they arrived the *Seignelay* was afloat again and lying at her anchor almost undamaged; and the senior French captain amiably remarked: "You English do not know the word impossible."

The British sloop *Melita*, Commander George F. King-Hall (now Admiral Sir G. F. King-Hall, K.C.B., C.V.O.), was already endeavouring to help the *Seignelay* when the *Undaunted* arrived; but the water was so shallow that the *Melita* could not approach nearer than 300 yards, and the *Undaunted* 850 yards, to the *Seignelay*.

I went on board the *Seignelay*, and found her captain seated in his cabin, profoundly dejected at the disaster. I cheered him as well as I could, telling him that of course I understood that he had only been waiting for more men to lighten his ship, and that I would send him 130 men with an officer who understood French to act as interpreter.

There was a heavy sea running; and the anchor I had brought in the launch was laid out astern of the *Seignelay* with considerable difficulty, and the end of the cable was brought on board the *Seignelay*.

Besides the *Melita*, the Austrian steamer *Diana*, the French steamer *Poitou* and the Russian steamer *Odessa* had all been endeavouring to rescue the *Seignelay*, but they had neither the men nor the gear required for the task. What was done subsequently was narrated in *The Times*, more than three years afterwards, by the anonymous writer aforesaid.

"Our First Lieutenant (Lieutenant Stokes Rees) went as

interpreter, and all our Captain wanted done was suggested by him to the French. He gave the orders to junior officers over our men, and I believe worked the French crew also by his suggestions, a fine old sailor who was one of their chief petty officers giving what orders were necessary. He hardly left the deck for three days and nights, and did his work splendidly.

"The ship was embedded 5½ feet in the sand, and so had to be lightened that much before we could hope to move her. This we spent all Wednesday afternoon in doing.

"On Thursday morning the *Melita* with a light draught Turkish steamer (the *Arcadia*) tried to pull her off but failed, while the *Melita* was very nearly wrecked herself. Nothing but very smart seamanship in making sail and casting off hawsers with cool judgment on the part of—— . . . saved her from being dashed in a good sea upon a jagged reef of rocks close to leeward. Her screw got fouled, and the willing but awkward Turk towed her head round towards the reef and she only just managed to get sail on her and shave it by 50 yards. She could not anchor or she would have swung on top of it. We were looking on powerless from our deep draught of water, though we hurried out hawsers, but it was one of the nearest shaves I have seen, and with the large number of men they had away in working parties, a thing to be very proud of and thankful for. . . ."

What happened was that the *Melita* fouled her screw with a hawser. I had warned her commander both orally and by signal to beware above all of fouling his screw. But circumstances defeated his efforts. When a man is doing his best in difficulties, there is no use in adding to his embarrassments by a reprimand. I signalled to Commander King-Hall to cheer up and to clear his screw as soon as he could; and I have reason to know that he deeply appreciated my motive in so doing.

To continue the narrative, which I have interrupted to quote an instance of disciplinary action in an emergency:

"All Thursday we worked on at lightening her, getting out 300 tons of coal, all her shot, shell, small guns, provisions and cables on board our ship, until every part of the ship was piled up with them, and all our nicely painted boats reduced to ragged cargo boats, besides being a good deal damaged owing to the exposed anchorage and seaway. We got out one strong, and two light, wire hawsers and with them the two ships tried to tow, but we parted the light hawsers at once.

"Then the Captain let me try a plan I had all along been urging but which he . . . and the French called a physical impossibility."

(The fact was, that the lighters and native boats were so unseaworthy that, until the weather moderated, the scheme, with all deference to the writer, was impracticable.)

"We hired native boats and large lighters, got out strong chain cables into them, and laid out 450 yards of chain cable between the *Melita* and ourselves, floated on these lighters. Thanks to the skill of our boatswain and a big quantity of men in the lighters this was done most successfully, though three lighters were sunk or destroyed in doing it.

"That afternoon, Friday the 1st, having got 450 tons out of the ship in forty-four hours, we got a fair pull at her with all three ships, the little Turk tugging manfully at his rotten hawser at one quarter and giving her a side pull occasionally. We gradually worked our mighty engines up to full speed, the chain cable tautened out as I have never seen chain do before and off she came.

"We manned the rigging and gave her cheer on cheer, the band playing the *Marseillaise* as the *Melita* towed her past our stern, while the Frenchmen hugged and kissed our men on their cheeks. It was a scene to be long remembered. The crowds of spectators lining the beach and walls, and our own men, 'spent but victorious' after their long forty-four hours of almost unceasing work, hardly anyone lying down for more than three or four hours either night. . . .

"By noon on Saturday we had replaced all their

gear on board, picked up their anchors and cables, etc., so that when their squadron came in that evening they found nothing left to do. They were really grateful and showed much good feeling, coming to call on us and being most friendly.

"On Monday night, when we left, the whole squadron cheered us manfully. . . ."

The British admiral was afterwards asked by the French Government to allow the *Undaunted* to proceed to the Gulf of Lions, where the French Fleet was lying, in order that the officers and men of the *Undaunted* might attend a reception in her honour. The *Undaunted* steamed down between the French lines, playing the *Marseillaise*, the French manning ship and cheering. Officers and men were most hospitably entertained with every mark of friendship and goodwill. The French Government most courteously presented me with a beautiful Sèvres vase, which is one of my most valued possessions.

When the time came for the *Undaunted* to go home, the commander-in-chief paid her a high compliment. The whole Fleet steamed out of Malta Harbour in line ahead, the *Undaunted* being the rear ship of the line. When we were to part company, every vessel, except the *Undaunted*, turned 16 points to port in succession (the line thus curving back upon itself) and steamed past the stern of the *Undaunted*. The commander-in-chief gave orders to cheer ship as each vessel passed the *Undaunted*: a stately farewell to the homeward bound.

On the passage home, in order to test the actual working of communication by signal between the Navy and the mercantile marine, a system whose reform I had constantly urged, I signalled, between Malta and Plymouth, to 33 merchantmen. Of the whole number, only three answered my signal, and of the three, only one answered it correctly, although several vessels passed within 600 yards of the *Undaunted*. The signals I made were short, such as "Where are you bound?" "Where are you from?"

"Have you seen any men-of-war?" "What weather have you had?" and some of them required only one hoist in reply.

The Royal Navy, a great part of whose duty in time of war would be the protection of commerce, was in fact at that time practically unable to communicate with the Merchant navy, either for the purpose of giving or receiving information, except by means of sending a boat to the vessel in question, a proceeding which must often be impossible, and which would always involve a delay which might bring serious consequences. No condition of affairs could more powerfully exemplify the national neglect of preparation for war. For in war, the maintenance of the lines of communication from ship to ship and ship to shore, is of the first importance.

The difficulty discovered by merchant vessels in signalling or replying to a signal consisted in their ignorance of signalling. They were seldom required to signal; the use of the commercial code involved a tedious process, impossible to accomplish quickly without constant practice; they were equipped with neither Morse nor semaphore apparatus, nor had officers or men learned how to use it. When a man-of-war signalled to a merchantman, the merchant skipper or mate must first try to decipher the flags of the hoist, an exercise to which he was totally unaccustomed. When he had decided that the flags were, say, blue with a white stripe, and red with a yellow stripe, he had to turn them up in the signal-book to discover what they meant. All this time the distance between the two ships was rapidly increasing. Having made out the signal, the merchant sailor must refer to his signal-book to find what flags made his reply; and having found them, he had to pick out the flag itself from a bundle. By the time he had finished these operations, if he ever finished them, the ships were nearly out of sight of each other.

The reform was eventually achieved largely by the personal enterprise and energy of the mercantile marine officers

themselves, who learned signalling, and who often paid for the necessary apparatus out of their own pockets.

The *Undaunted* paid off early in 1893. Upon the evening of the day upon which I arrived in London, I went to the House of Commons to listen to the debate upon the Navy Estimates.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

## THE SECOND SHIPBUILDING PROGRAMME

IT is easier to take the helm than to be on the con. I have always been on the con. To drop the metaphor, I have looked ahead in matters of naval defence and have pointed out what (in my view) ought to be done. In 1889, I resigned my post at the Board of Admiralty in order to fasten public attention upon the instant necessity of strengthening the Fleet by the addition of 70 vessels at a cost of £20,000,000. In the same year, the Naval Defence Act provided those vessels at a cost a little in excess of my estimate. That was my first shipbuilding programme. Many other forces were of course exerted to the same end: the representations of distinguished brother officers; the many excellent articles in the Press; and the steadily increasing pressure of public opinion, then much less warped by party politics than it has since become. Apart from these influences, which were fortified by the irresistible logic of the truth, my own efforts must have availed little. But above all (to resume my metaphor), it was the helmsman at the Admiralty who put the wheel over. Captain W. H. Hall, Director of the Intelligence Department, worked out the requirements of the case, unknown to me, and arrived at the same conclusions as those at which I had arrived, and the Board of Admiralty adopted his scheme. By the irony of circumstance, the Intelligence Department had been instituted, in consequence of my representations, before I left the Admiralty, for the precise purpose of reporting upon the requirements of defence; and the first report of its fearless

and enlightened chief completely upset the comfortable theories both of the Board and of the Government.

I have briefly recalled these matters, fully related in a previous chapter, because they present a curious parallel with the events of 1893–4.

In July, 1893, while still on half-pay, I addressed the London Chamber of Commerce on the subject of "The Protection of the mercantile marine in War." Since I had left the *Undaunted*, early in the year, I had been occupied once more in drawing up a scheme of naval requirements, specifying what was required, why it was required, and how much it would cost, and giving a detailed list of the necessary vessels. The protection of the mercantile marine was the first part of it; the whole was not completed until just before I was appointed captain of the Steam Reserve at Chatham; and it would have been improper for me to have published the paper while on active service. It was intended that I should read it before the London Chamber of Commerce, following upon and amplifying my address dealing with the protection of the mercantile marine in war. But as there was no time available for the purpose before I went on active service, I gave the scheme to Mr. John Jackson, for the London Chamber of Commerce. I may take this opportunity of paying a tribute to the disinterested and untiring patriotic zeal of the late Mr. Jackson, between whom and myself a warm friendship existed.

In my address upon the protection of the mercantile marine in war, the abrogation of the Declaration of Paris of 1856 was urged as a primary condition of British naval supremacy: a condition unequivocally laid down in the Report of the Three Admirals in 1889. Subsequent events have shown that successive British Governments, far from recognising the essential elements of sea power, continued to yield point after point, until at the Naval Conferences of 1907 and 1909, whose recommendations were embodied in the Declaration of London, British Ministers virtually conceded nearly every right gained by centuries of hard fighting

in the past. Fortunately, public indignation has hitherto prevented the ratification of that fatal instrument.

It was also shown in my address that, at the time, the naval protection for the mercantile marine was in the ratio of one small cruiser to 71 sailing vessels and one small cruiser to 41 steamers; that there were dangerous deficiencies in the supplies of reserve coal and ammunition; that a reserve force of at least 20 battleships was required; and that there was urgent need for the immediate construction of the mole and other works at Gibraltar.

The shipbuilding programme was designed to show how these and other requirements were to be met. Mr. John Jackson caused it to be published on his own responsibility. The execution of the requirements therein specified involved an expenditure of 25 millions spread over three and a half years. Their necessity was supported by Vice-Admiral P. H. Colomb, writing in *The United Service Magazine*; by many letters in the Press written by my brother officers; by further excellent articles in *The Times* and other papers; and by Lord George Hamilton, ex-First Lord of the Admiralty.

In November, Lord Salisbury publicly stated that "men of different schools with respect to maritime and military defences, men of very different services and experiences and ability," were united in urging that steps should be at once taken to re-establish the maritime supremacy of this country.

The fact was, of course, that the provision made by the Naval Defence Act of 1889 was running out, and that in the revolution of the party political machine, the periodic neglect of the Navy had occurred as usual. As one party attains a lease of power, it is forced to increase the strength of the Fleet; the effort expends itself; then the other party comes in, and either reduces the Fleet, or neglects it, or both, until public opinion is once more aroused by infinite shoutings and untiring labour, and the Government are coerced into doing their plain duty.

Such was the situation in 1888–9; such was it in 1893–4.

In 1888–9, a Conservative administration was in power; in 1893–4, Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister. The difficulty of the situation in 1893–4 was therefore more obstinate, inasmuch as Mr. Gladstone's Ministry held that the reduction of expenditure upon defence was an act of moral virtue; whereas Lord Salisbury's Government merely waited to be convinced of the necessity of increase, before doing their duty.

Nevertheless, what happened? The Navy Estimates of March, 1894, provided for an expenditure of no less than 30½ millions upon new construction spread over five years; as compared with my proposal of 25 millions spread over three and a half years. The Government actually provided more than was contained in my programme.

The Spencer programme, as it is called, was a much bigger scheme than the programme of 1888–9. It not only provided the ships required, but included a scheme for manning them. It included a comprehensive programme of naval works in which, for the first time in history, the defence of the Empire was treated as a whole. Provision was made for deepening and improving the harbours of Portsmouth, Chatham, Devonport, Haulbowline, for the Keyham extension, for naval barracks at Chatham and Walmer, for the new works at Gibraltar, for the construction of harbours at Portland, Dover, and Simon's Bay, and for large extensions of the dockyards at Malta, Hong Kong and Simon's Bay. The cost of the works was to be met by monies raised under a Naval Loan Act. That Act is still in force, but a later Government declined to utilise it; with the inevitable result that the neglected and dismantled condition of the coaling stations and naval bases abroad, constitute a present danger to the Empire, and will in the future require a vast expenditure, which need never have been incurred, to be devoted to their restoration.

To what extraordinary influence, then, was the conversion of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues to be attributed? There was, in fact, no conversion. It was a case of coercion;

or, as Mr. Gladstone entertained a strong dislike to the word, let us call it moral suasion. The explanation is simple and sufficient. In August, 1893, which was the time when the representations concerning naval deficiencies were becoming insistent, Admiral Sir Frederick Richards was appointed First Sea Lord. Sir Frederick Richards, it will be remembered, was one of the Three Admirals who drew up the historic "Report on The Naval Manœuvres of 1888," and it was chiefly due to his genius and patriotism that from a technical disquisition the Report became a masterly exposition of the true principles of British sea power. Incidentally, it endorsed the whole of my representations set forth in my shipbuilding programme, which were embodied in the Naval Defence Act of 1889.

Sir Frederick Richards, too, had been a member of the Hartington Commission on Naval and Military Administration, which reported in 1890; and which, although its recommendations were for many years neglected by successive Governments, at least taught its members what was the real condition of affairs, and what were the requirements of organisation for war. Sir Frederick, therefore, came to his high office furnished not only with the sea experience of a flag officer afloat, but equipped with a detailed knowledge of administration and organisation; and endowed, in addition, with so remarkable a genius, that he was one of the greatest naval administrators known to the history of the Royal Navy.

His devotion to duty was the master motive of his life; nor was there a man living who could turn him by the breadth of a hair from what he believed to be right. Having planned, as the proper adviser of Lord Spencer, the First Lord, the great shipbuilding and naval works scheme of 1894–5, he was confronted by the strong opposition of Mr. Gladstone and his Cabinet.

Sir Frederick Richards and the whole of his naval colleagues on the Board immediately informed the Government that, unless their proposals for strengthening the

Fleet and for providing for the naval defence of the Empire, were accepted, they would resign. It was enough. The Government yielded.

The Naval Lords were: Admiral Sir Frederick Richards, K.C.B.; Rear-Admiral the Lord Walter Talbot Kerr; Rear-Admiral Sir John Arbuthnot Fisher, K.C.B.; and Captain Gerard Henry Uctred Noel.

It was in commemoration of the action of Sir Frederick Richards that the Navy caused his portrait to be painted, and presented it to the nation. Inscribed with the legend "From the Navy to the Nation," it hangs in the Painted Hall at Greenwich, where it was placed during the lifetime of the admiral, an unique distinction.

As in 1889, when many of my brother officers and myself were conning the ship, it was the helmsman at the Admiralty who put the wheel over, and again I was wholly ignorant of his intentions. But this time the helmsman was none other than the First Sea Lord, and with him were his naval colleagues. With him, too, was the great body of public opinion in the country; and as in 1888, those of us who had been toiling to educate it, may at least claim to have set in motion a force lacking which it is almost impossible, under a pseudo-democratic government, to accomplish any great reform whatever.

It is not too much to say that to the shipbuilding and naval works programme initiated and planned by Sir Frederick Richards in 1894–5, and carried by his courage and resolution, the Empire owes its subsequent immunity from external attack, notably at the time of the Fashoda incident and during the South African war.

Sir Frederick Richards was so great a man, that he could even nullify the injurious effect of the legal supremacy of the civilian First Lord over the Board, which technically deprives it of collective administrative authority. He served, however, with two high-minded gentlemen, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Goschen who succeeded Lord Spencer.

I have had to do with three great shipbuilding programmes. The first was carried after the resignation of one member of the Board, myself; the second, by the threatened resignation of all the Naval Lords. Of the third anon.

## CHAPTER XL

## STEAM RESERVE

IN the days of the sailing Navy, when an accident occurred, the captain knew every method by which it could be repaired, and gave directions exactly how the work was to be done. He was not necessarily able to do the work with his own hands (although I know at least one captain who could); but (what was more important) he knew how it ought to be done. Should a topsail-yard carry away, for instance, the captain would know whether to have it sawn in half longitudinally and the halves reversed; or to cut out the damaged piece and replace it with a new piece woolded on and wedged; or to fish the yard.

There was once a captain on the China station who asked the Admiralty for a baulk of timber, because his main-yard had carried away; whereupon the Admiralty officially desired to be officially informed who had carried it away, where to, and why.

In the steam Navy, it is equally necessary that a captain should be acquainted with the various methods of handling material and machinery, in order that he may be able to direct the trained artificer. One case among many which fell under my own observation illustrates the point. A cylinder having cracked, the engineer officer proposed to drill the holes for the bolts securing strengthening pieces in a row; when it was shown to him that the result would be to make the cylinder, like a sheet of postage-stamps, liable to tear; but that if he set his holes in an in-and-out pattern, he would avoid that weakness. As the captain, so the

admiral. Every admiral in command of a fleet should be competent to direct the execution of even the smallest repairs; for upon what seems a trifling detail may depend the safety of the ship.

Such, at least, were the considerations that induced me to apply for a dockyard appointment. And upon the 15th July, 1893, I was appointed captain of the Steam Reserve at Chatham Dockyard, under the command of Rear-Admiral George D. Morant, flying his flag in the *Algiers*, guardship of Reserve. Rear-Admiral Morant (now Admiral Sir. G. D. Morant, K.C.B.) was a first-rate officer, of indefatigable energy, an excellent administrator, and a most charming chief.

All vessels under construction and repair were under the admiral-superintendent; I was his executive officer; and the object of appointing a sea-going officer was that details of construction should be tested in accordance with the use to which they would be put at sea. Let us say, for instance, that two ships were under construction, one which was 43 feet in the beam, and the other 65 feet. Awning stanchions of the same size were fitted to both ships; and when the awning was rigged in the larger vesssel, the stanchions came home. Another advantage of sea-going knowledge was impressed upon me while I was in the *Thunderer*. She had some forty or fifty deck-plates, covering valves and ventilating shafts. The deck-plates and shafts were of various sizes, involving the use of a large number of spanners to fit them. These took up space and added an unnecessary weight. A seaman would have made a standard pattern with one or two spanners to fit the whole number.

It was my duty to take command in all steam trials of vessels, and tests of appliances and machinery, and to compare all work with its specification.

During 1893–4, the *Magnificent* was being built by Chatham in rivalry of Portsmouth, which was building her sister battleship the *Majestic*. It was becoming a close thing, when the *Magnificent* received from the manufacturers

a lot of armour plates, which might have gone to the *Majestic*, and which enabled us to gain a lead. The *Magnificent* was launched by the Countess Spencer, in December, 1894. The ship was built in thirteen months from the date of laying the keel-plate; an achievement for which high credit was due to the chief constructor, Mr. J. A. Yates, and to the constructors, Mr. H. Cock and Mr. W. H. Gard.

When I took the *Magnificent* upon her trials, Lord Wolseley, Colonel Brabazon, and Mr. Baird, American Ambassador, accompanied me as guests. We returned from the Nore in a torpedo-boat, at full speed, in the dark. In those days there were no lights in the Medway; and we jumped the spit. Lord Wolseley inquired if "we always took short cuts across the land."

When a new ship was completed by the Royal Dockyards, the task of cleaning her and completing arrangements in detail was performed by working parties, which usually consisted of pensioners. The principle was that when she was taken over from the Dockyard authorities to be commissioned, she should be ready for sea. In the case of the *Magnificent*, for instance, when Lord Walter Kerr hoisted his flag in her, in December, 1895, she was absolutely complete in every detail: decks spotless, store-rooms labelled, hammock-hooks numbered: there was nothing for officers and men to do but to find their quarters.

An instance of the necessity of testing appliances according to sea requirements occurred when I was testing capstans. The ships were taken into deep water, so that the whole length of the cable was run out by the time the anchor touched bottom; and it was then discovered that the capstan was too weak to lift the amount of vertical chain specified.

When I was trying a torpedo-boat at full speed, the helm suddenly jammed, and the boat instantly went out of control in the neighbourhood of a number of trawlers. Luckily, she went round and round in a circle until she was stopped.

She did not hit a trawler; but it was a very lively minute or two.

A party of us went to a ball at Sheerness, going thither in a tug; and intending to return the same night, we left the house at about one o'clock. There was a thick fog, and the captain of the tug declined to start. As I made it a rule to sleep in my own quarters at Chatham if I possibly could, I said I would take the tug back. As there were no lights, I found the channel by the simple method of hitting its banks; and cannoning off and on all the way, we made the passage.

In November, 1892, the *Howe* battleship had struck upon an uncharted rock in Ferrol harbour; and Rear-Admiral Edward Seymour (now Admiral of the Fleet Sir E. H. Seymour, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O.) was appointed to inspect the salvage operations. These occupied nearly five months. Sir Edward gives a brief but interesting account of the work in his book, *My Naval Career*. After the *Howe* had been floated, she was dry-docked at Ferrol, where she remained for nearly two months, while temporary repairs were being effected. When she struck the rock, her port side forward was stove in for nearly half her length, and her after part remained resting on a "rocky shoal of hard granite." Sir Edward Seymour says "that after the ship was got into dock at Ferrol, I could stand on a temporary flooring where the bottom of the ship used to be, and holding one hand over my head could not touch where the ship's bottom plates had been driven up to." He adds that "the mud, slime and dirt covering everything as the water was cleared from below, and the bad smell were almost beyond belief."

We at Chatham could confirm the observation; for it was to Chatham that the *Howe* returned to be repaired. When she arrived, she was still coated with stinking mud, and we did our best to clean her. But notwithstanding our utmost diligence, a minute quantity of this virulent slime was afterwards found under the rolling-plate of the turrets.

The men who slung their hammocks near the turrets fell sick of fever; and its origin was traced to the mud.

The salving of a vessel so badly injured was a fine achievement. Sir Edward Seymour brought her to Sheerness under her own steam at eight knots. We dealt with her for a few months, until she was all a-taunto again, when she was re-commissioned and went to the Mediterranean.

It is the duty of a captain of the Dockyard Reserve to make representations, through the admiral-superintendent, to the Admiralty, with regard to improvements in construction and material. My suggestions concerning water-tight doors in ships were subsequently embodied in a paper read before the Institution of Naval Architects. In the design of the first ironclads, the vessels were actually divided into water-tight compartments by bulkheads without doors or apertures. In later designs, numerous doors were cut in the bulkheads for the sake of convenience of access, which, together with the many ventilating shafts and valves, in effect nullified the system of dividing a vessel into water-tight sections. The doors themselves were hung on hinges and closed with hanks and wedges; an inefficient method. My suggestions, which were afterwards adopted, were that the number of doors should be greatly reduced; and that they should be vertical, and made to screw up and down; and that the ventilating shafts fitted with an automatic closing apparatus which did not work should be abolished.

Among other proposals were the substitution of ships' names, plainly lettered, for figure-heads and scroll-work, and the abolition of the ram. At that time, our men-of-war were built with unarmoured ends, only the protective steel deck extending the whole length and breadth of the ship. It followed that if the side of a hostile vessel were pierced by the long projecting ram of a British ship, the force of her impact would strip her bows of the light construction above the protective deck, and she would remain toggled in the enemy and helpless. Far more effective, if ramming is to

be done, would be the direct blow of a vertical bow. At the same time, I continued to represent the radical weakness of unarmoured ends.

In 1894, five years after the passing of the Naval Defence Act, and the date at which the great Spencer shipbuilding programme, involving a large increase of officers and men, was begun, the serious deficiency in the personnel became manifest. The fact was, that the Naval Defence Act of 1889 had not included proper provision for manning the new ships as they came into commission; and just when the boys who ought to have been entered in 1889 would have become available as able seamen, it was discovered that they did not exist. But by that time, of course, the Government responsible for the deficiency was out of office, and, as usual, there was no one to be called to account.

In September, 1894, Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, who has performed so much invaluable service in educating the public to logical ideas upon organisation for war and problems of national defence, began to publish his excellent articles dealing with "The Command of the Sea," in which the demand for the institution of a Naval War Staff was formulated. It was for the purpose of enforcing this necessity that the Navy League was founded by "four average Englishmen" in December, 1894. Among its original supporters were Earl Roberts, V.C., Lord George Hamilton, Sir Charles Dilke, Sir John Puleston, the Master of Trinity House, Sir Charles Lawson, Mr. Joseph Cowen, Mr. Arnold-Forster, and myself.

It will be observed that the original aim of the Navy League was to ensure the fulfilment of the idea upon which the Intelligence Department was founded upon my representations in 1888. The Navy League subsequently added to itself other objects, which perhaps obscured its first purpose. The War Staff at the Admiralty was constituted in 1912, in accordance with the recommendations of the Beresford Inquiry of 1909.

In 1893, the year before the Navy League was founded,

and just previous to my appointment to Chatham, I publicly advocated the institution of a Council of Defence, under the presidency of a Minister, composed of the best admirals and generals. The project was afterwards carried into execution by Mr. Balfour; but its utility was vitiated by being framed to suit the ends of party politics.

In May, 1894, the U.S. cruiser *Chicago* anchored off Gravesend; and at a banquet given to the American admiral and officers, I had the pleasure of renewing my old acquaintance with the American Navy, begun in 1882 at the bombardment of Alexandria. Admiral Erben flew his flag in the *Chicago*, and Captain Mahan was flag-captain.

It was a great pleasure to meet Captain Mahan (now Admiral Mahan), whose classic work on *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* came to me while I was in command of the *Undaunted*, and concerning which, as before related, some correspondence had passed between us.

Captain Mahan and myself contributed articles to *The North American Review* of November, 1894, on "The Possibilities of an Anglo-American Reunion." Captain Mahan, preferring to postpone the advocacy of a formal alliance between the two nations, looked forward to the development of such relations as would make it feasible; while I urged the conclusion of a defensive alliance for the protection of those common interests upon which depends the prosperity of the two countries. That the English-speaking nations should combine to preserve the peace of the world, has always seemed to me a reasonable aspiration, and I have said so in both countries when opportunity served.

In December, 1894, desiring to represent the interests of the Service in Parliament as soon as might be, I applied once more to the Admiralty to be permitted, according to precedent, to count my service in the Soudan campaign as time spent in the command of a ship of war; but the application was again refused. From many constituencies invitations to stand were sent to me; among them were

Stockport, North Kensington, Birkenhead, Liverpool, East Toxteth, Armagh, Dublin, Cardiff, Chatham, Devonport, Pembroke and Portsmouth.

In those days Mr. W. L. Wyllie (now R.A.) used to haunt the Medway and the Nore, boat-sailing and painting. He can handle a boat as well as he handles his brush; that is, to perfection. Mr. Wyllie gave me a boat which he had built with his own hands, I think out of biscuit boxes. I tried it in a basin at Chatham, accompanied by a warrant officer of the *Pembroke*. We were becalmed; a sudden puff came; and over we went. In memory of the disaster, I gave the warrant officer a pipe, the bowl of which was appropriately carved to represent a death's-head.

While I was at Chatham, my home was Park Gate House, Ham Common. Here I had a model farm, producing milk, eggs and poultry, which were readily sold in Richmond, whose streets and thoroughfares were greatly enlivened by the daily procession of my large and shining brass milk-cans. I was not in the sad case of Captain Edward Pellew (afterwards Lord Exmouth), who upon quitting the sea and taking a farm, in 1791, complained that the crops grew so slowly that they made his eyes ache.

During my absence a burglar entered the house. The butler, hearing a noise, rose from his bed, took a revolver, and sought for the intruder, who fled before him to the roof, whence he fell headlong through a skylight. He must have been a good deal cut, for he bled all over the place. The butler, following, also fell through the skylight; but, presumably falling through the same hole, was little damaged. Continuing the chase, he was brought up short by a wire entanglement previously set by the burglar for the butler's confusion. So he sat where he was, and continued to fire steadily in the direction he supposed the burglar to have gone, until his ammunition was all expended.

It may be interesting to recall that in September, 1893, Sir Augustus Harris was appointed manager of Drury Lane Opera House by the committee which was then organising

the opera in this country. I urged his selection on account of his great administrative ability; and prevailed over the objection that he was only skilled in pantomime.

The committee had been formed to improve the opera, which was then performed at three different theatres: Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and Her Majesty's; so that the available talent was scattered. Sir Augustus Harris combined the three into one at Drury Lane.

In October, 1895, occurred the death of my brother, Lord Waterford, at the age of fifty-one. He had been for long completely disabled by a bad accident in the hunting field; and although his sufferings were constant and acute, he continued staunchly to discharge his many duties to the end. He was succeeded in the marquisate by his son.

My appointment at Chatham terminated in March, 1896; and a few days later I delivered at Birmingham an address dealing with the requirements of naval defence.

## CHAPTER XLI

## VIEWS AND REVIEWS

THE three years succeeding the termination of my appointment at Chatham were mainly occupied with questions of naval reform. The task was of my own choosing; and if, in comparison with the life I led, the existence of the early martyrs was leisured, dignified and luxurious, it is not for me to draw the parallel. The chief difficulty encountered by any reformer is not an evil but a good. It is the native virtue of the English people, which leads them to place implicit confidence in constituted authority. The advocacy of a change implies that constituted authority is failing to fulfil its duty. You cannot at the same time both trust and distrust the men in charge of affairs. Again, reform often involves expenditure; and the dislike to spend money upon an idea is natural to man. And it is the custom of constituted authority to tell the people that all is well, in fact never so well. They have all the weight of their high office behind them; and people will believe what they are told by authority in despite of the evidence of their senses.

Moreover, there are endless difficulties and disappointments inherent in the very nature of the task of the naval or military reformer. The problems of defence are highly intricate; and although the principles governing them remain unaltered, the application of those principles is constantly changing. The most skilled officers may differ one from another; and a man who is devoting his whole time and energy to benefit the Service to which he belongs,

will often be disheartened by the opposition of his brother officers.

The influence of society, again, is often baneful. Society is apt to admonish a public man, especially if he be popular, perpetually telling him that he must not do this, and he must not say that, or he will injure his reputation, ruin his career, and alienate his friends; until, perhaps, he becomes so habitually terrified at what may happen, that he ends by doing nothing, and spoiling his career at the latter end after all. Public life to-day is permeated through and through with a selfish solicitude for personal immunity. But it remains the fact that he who intends to achieve a certain object, must first put aside all personal considerations. Upon going into action, a fighting man is occupied, not with speculations as to whether or not he will be hit, and if so where, but in trying to find out where and how soon and how hard he can hit the enemy. Even so, he may be beaten; but at least he will have nothing to regret; he will be able to say that if it were all to do again, he would do the same; for he will know that on any other terms his defeat would be assured.

If, then, these pages record in brief the continual endeavours of those who made it their business to represent to the nation the requirements of Imperial defence, it is for the purpose of once more exemplifying the defects in our system which periodically expose the country and the Empire to dangers from without and panics from within, and involve them in a series of false economies alternating with spasms of wasteful expenditure. The remedy advocated was the constitution of a body whose duty it should be to represent requirements. Such a body was not created until 1912. In the meantime, more money was spent than would purchase security, which was not always obtained. Nor have we yet produced what is the first essential of national security, the feeling of the officers and men of the fighting services that they are being justly treated by the nation in the matter of pay and pension and proper administrative treatment.

In 1896, the most pressing need of the Navy was for more officers and men. As already explained, the failure to enter the number required to man the ships of the Naval Defence Act of 1889, had now become manifest. Battleships are a showy asset; the absence of men is not noticed by the public; therefore the politician builds the ships and omits the men. In an address delivered before the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce in July, 1896, I stated that the deficiency in the personnel was 27,562 men, including a deficiency of 5000 in engine-room ratings. A resolution urging the necessity of an immediate increase in the personnel was passed by the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, and was sent to the First Lord, Mr. Goschen.

The First Lord replied to the resolution, stating that the increase in the personnel since 1889 had been 31,360. These figures, however, included the whole of the numbers borne, without distinction of the numbers available for sea service, and represented the numbers voted, irrespective of deaths or retirements. The true increase was estimated by me, upon the evidence of the Navy Estimates, at 17,262; and the total number required at 105,000.

A good deal of public interest having been aroused on the subject, Mr. Goschen stated in the House that it would be his duty next year "to propose such a number of men for the Navy and Reserves as we judge to be rendered necessary by the extension of the Fleet."

The increase of personnel was provided accordingly. Here is one instance among many, of a responsible statesman declaring in all good faith that matters were perfectly satisfactory as they were; being obliged by the insistence of outside representations to examine requirements; and then discovering that these were in fact what had been represented. Mr. Goschen was necessarily dependent upon the advice of the Sea Lords; but the Sea Lords themselves were immersed in the mass of routine work involved in keeping the machine going. The business of supply and the business of organisa-

tion for war were confused together; with the inevitable result that organisation for war was neglected.

The personnel was increased in 1897–8 by 6300 (numbers voted). In the following year, 1898–9, my estimate of 105,000 men was passed, the numbers voted being 106,390; and, excepting intervals of false economy, continued to rise until they now (1913) stand at 146,000.

The proposals with regard to the personnel were supported by (among others) Admiral Sir R. Vesey Hamilton, who, in a letter to *The Times* of 2nd April, 1897, stated that "an ex-Controller of the Navy said to me when I was at the Admiralty, 'Your building programme is ahead of the manning.' And he was right, more particularly in officers." Sir R. Vesey Hamilton was a Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty from January, 1889, the year of the Naval Defence Act, to September, 1891. His testimony is therefore authoritative. It was, of course, no fault of Sir Vesey Hamilton that the personnel was deficient.

It is not too much to say that owing to the omission from that Act of the requisite increase in the personnel, the Navy has been short of men ever since.

In December, 1896, I suggested in a letter to the Press that promotion to flag-rank should take place at an earlier age in order that officers might gain the necessary experience while still in the vigour of youth. Officers who remain too long in a subordinate position are liable to have the faculty of initiative taken out of them, and to fall into the habit of thinking that things will last their time. The services of old and experienced officers are of course invaluable; but officers should acquire the knowledge of the duties of an admiral (upon whom in modern warfare all depends) as early in life as possible. Progressive pay for all ranks from lieutenants upwards, was also advocated.

The requirements of the time were set forth by me in an article contributed to *The Nineteenth Century* of February, 1897. Briefly, these were as follows:

1. The necessity of obtaining the requisite number of personnel for active service, long service ratings, such number to be definitely specified by the Board of Admiralty as being necessary to fulfil stated requirements.

2. A thorough reorganisation of the Royal Naval Reserve. A scheme of reorganisation, founded on the proposals of Captain Joseph Honner, Royal Navy, Captain Crutchley, R.N.R., and others, was explained by me to the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce. In order to meet the emergency, it was suggested that 5000 men should be annually joined for five years, after which they should pass into the first-class Reserve; at the same time, 5000 men should be annually joined for two months' training, after which they should pass into the second-class Reserve.

Such emergencies periodically occur, because the authorities neglect to look ahead.

3. Seventeen old but useful ironclads to be re-armed with modern guns.

A list of these was drawn up; the proposed alterations in each vessel were specified in detail, together with their cost; a task which took me some three months to accomplish.

The principle of the suggestion was that the invention of the quick-firing gun was actually a far more important revolution than the change from muzzle-loading to breech-loading guns. It was calculated that the older vessels were strong enough to withstand the increased strain. The proposal was not made in order to avoid the necessity of building new vessels, but as an expedient to make up a deficiency in ships. Building new vessels was the preferable course of action, which the Admiralty rightly decided to adopt.

4. The advisability of eliminating altogether from the number of ships in commission or in reserve those vessels which could neither fight nor run away, and of replacing them by modern vessels.

The scheme was carried into effect by degrees. Such an elimination should take place periodically, upon the

industrial principle of replacing obsolete plant with new machines. In later years, the elimination of old vessels which was carried into effect by the Admiralty, was effected without replacing them by new ships, a course of action which contravened the very principle upon which it was ostensibly based.

5. The advisability of holding annual manœuvres in combination with the Army at all naval bases of operation.

6. The designing of a definite plan of Imperial defence, or plan of campaign; and the provision and equipment of such naval bases and stations abroad as should enable such plan to be put into effective operation.

It will be observed that all the aforesaid recommendations of my brother officers and myself were directed to the fulfilment of Sir Frederick Richards' great scheme of 1894–5, as already described. In the result, the Naval Works Bill, March 1897, showed that work was in progress at Gibraltar, Portland, Dover, Keyham, Portsmouth, Hong Kong, Colombo, Pembroke, Haulbowline; on barracks at Chatham, Sheerness, Portsmouth, Keyham, Walmer, the new college for engineers at Keyham and new magazines, the money voted being just under a million.

Writing from Cairo, in March, 1897, to the secretary of the Guildhall Club (the letter being published at the time) I said that Mr. Brodrick's speech showed that the Government had a definite plan of campaign, which was "proved by the proposal to fortify important strategic bases at present absolutely undefended; . . . without such fortified bases it is palpable that no clear plan of campaign existed at headquarters; and a happy-go-lucky method must have prevailed in the event of war. The Government appear to me to have really begun to put our defences into business-like trim and to have looked into and endeavoured to make complete all those auxiliaries, any one of which being imperfect would jeopardise the defences of the Empire as a whole. . . . It is always very hard for authorities to make proposals involving large sums of money unless the public

and the Press combine to show that they wish such expenditure."

There remained, and still remains, an essential reform to be accomplished. I have never ceased to advocate as a matter of elementary justice such an increase of the pay of officers and men as should bear some proportion to the responsibilities with which they are charged and the duties which they fulfil. In 1897, the increase of the officers' pay, the rate of which had hardly been altered since the time of Nelson, was an urgent necessity. As a result of the steady refusal of the Government to grant anything except the most meagre concessions, officers are now leaving the Service almost daily, and among those who remain there is considerable discontent. At that time, the pay of the men was, if not generous, still adequate. Owing to a variety of causes, it has since become totally inadequate; the concessions wrung from the Government in response to perfectly reasonable demands are ridiculously insufficient; and numbers of trained men are leaving the Service as soon as they can.

In view of the obstinacy of the Government upon this matter, it is worth recalling that, speaking at Newbury in May, 1897, I put the whole case for the officers as plainly as possible. It was pointed out that every condition of life had improved during the Queen's reign, except the pay and prospects of the officers and men of the Royal Navy, although their responsibilities had increased a hundred-fold. The lieutenant's pay was £15 a month; after eight years he could get £3 a month extra; and after twelve years another £3 extra. Except for specialist duty, such as gunnery, torpedo and navigation, he could not get another shilling. There were over 200 lieutenants then on the list of over twelve years' service, who were only getting £21 a month. They could get no more, although some among them had twenty-one years' service. Half-pay, often compulsory, was a shameful scandal to the country. It was not even half-pay, but very often barely a third. Rear-admirals of forty

years' service were sent on shore with £450 a year to live upon. Captains were even worse off, often getting four years on compulsory half-pay at £200 a year.

That was sixteen years ago. The Government have done nothing worth consideration in the interval.

The case was again publicly represented by me in 1912. By that time, owing to the increase in price of the necessities of life and other causes, the pay of the men had become grossly inadequate. In order that it should be commensurate with the pay obtained by an equivalent class of men in civil employment, it ought to have been doubled. All that the Government did was to grant a trifling increase to men of a certain term of service. How long will the nation allow the Navy to continue a sweated industry?

Another measure of reform which is still far from accomplishment, is the manning of British ships by British seamen. The principle, as I stated in May, 1897, is that in dealing with the innumerable emergencies inseparable from the life of the sea, it is better to depend upon British seamen than upon foreigners. In May, 1897, it was estimated that of the total number of men employed in the mercantile marine, the proportion of British seamen was no more than three-fourths.

In the same year, 1897, the question of the contribution of the Colonies to Imperial Naval Defence, which, for practical purposes, was first raised at the Imperial Conference of 1887, was the subject of one of those discussions which have occupied the public mind at intervals ever since; and which have eventually resulted in the decision of Australia and New Zealand to establish navies of their own.

In a letter written in reply to a correspondent and published in the Press in June, 1897, I expressed the opinion that:

"It certainly would help in Imperial defence if the Colonies did subscribe some portion of the money necessary to secure adequate Imperial defence, but I think that all such proposals should emanate from the Colonies in the first instance."

In another communication I observed that: "We can only be prepared for war thoroughly when the Colonies offer to join us in a definite scheme of Imperial defence, and the Colonies and their trade are inseparable portions of the question of Imperial defence. We must, however, offer them an inducing *quid pro quo*. We cannot expect that they will bear a share of the costs unless we are prepared to give them a voice in the administration of Imperial affairs. Imperial consolidation must be real, not one-sided, and we must devise a scheme for admitting the Colonies to Parliamentary representation on all questions affecting Imperial policy."

And in a letter to the Secretary of the Toronto Branch of the Navy League, I said: "The great necessity of the times is to have thoroughly equipped and efficient naval bases in all the Colonies, so that no matter where a British man-of-war meets the enemy, she will practically be fighting in home waters with a good base within easy reach for repairs, stores, coal, etc."

I still think that this was a practical suggestion. Some years afterwards, Canada took over certain naval bases; but the result has not been a success. But she took them over at a time when the British Government were engaged in dismantling and abandoning naval bases all over the world. These have still to be restored. But as the danger is out of sight, the public do not perceive that the demolition of naval bases abroad may very likely, in the event of war, result in disaster to the British Navy.

In June, 1897, was celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. Some observations contained in an article contributed by me to *The Navy League Guide* to the great naval review held at Spithead, may perhaps be historically interesting. It was shown that the two great naval reviews, that of the Jubilee in 1887 and the Diamond Jubilee of 1897, mark important epochs in the history of the British Navy. The Fleet of 1887 was in no way adequate to our needs at that time, and many of the ships assembled for review could not have taken their places in the fighting line.

(So it was represented at the time; luckily, the supreme test of war was escaped; the proof that the need existed, therefore, resides in its ultimate recognition by the authorities.) In 1897, on the contrary, there was assembled a fleet of warships representing a large proportion of the Navy we then possessed, which was rapidly becoming equal to our necessities both in numbers and efficiency. In 1887, the battleship fleet was represented by only four vessels of less than ten years of age, *Collingwood*, *Edinburgh*, *Conqueror* and *Ajax*. Two out of the four were armed with muzzle-loading guns, although all foreign navies had mounted nothing but breech-loaders for several years previously. The contrast afforded by the 1897 review was remarkable. Nothing could better have displayed the giant strides we had made both in construction and fighting efficiency, than the eleven splendid first-class battleships assembled on 26th June, 1897.

A suggestion was added which was not adopted; nor has the proposal yet been carried into execution upon a large scale, probably because the authorities are afraid of accidents. "To make the review a success and to test the capabilities of the captains, it would be well if the Fleet could be got under way and ordered to pass the royal yacht, which should be anchored as the saluting base. Possibly a few accidents would occur, but it would be a capital display of seamanship and the art of handling ships; and no Fleet in the world could execute so imposing a manœuvre so well as our own."

Indeed, I have always held that a naval review should be conducted like a military review. The Sovereign should first proceed between the lines; then the ships should get under way and should steam past the saluting base.

The Dean of Saint Paul's unexpectedly provided a diversion in naval affairs. In order to make room in the Cathedral for the monument to be erected to the memory of the late Lord Leighton, *P*.R.A., the Dean proposed to remove the monument to Captain Richard Rundle Burges, R.N., from the south aisle to the crypt; a proceeding to

which I expressed strong objection on behalf of the Service to which I had the honour to belong. The controversy was conducted in the columns of *The Times*.

The Dean, writing on 7th July, 1897, protested that the "monument is unsightly. Captain Burges making love to Victory over a gun is not a very suitable monument for a church, and during the twenty-eight years I have been connected with the Cathedral I have been most anxious to see this monument in a less conspicuous place."

In my reply, I said that, in the first place, I was not prepared to accept his description of the sculptor's work; and secondly, that it was rather late in the day to criticise it. And I submitted to the Dean and Chapter, that as the Cathedral did not appear to have suffered by the retention of that monument for the last hundred years, no harm could possibly result from allowing it to remain. And I submitted with great respect that the twenty-eight years' repugnance of the present Dean had curiously enough only found vent in action at the time when it was found necessary to select a spot for the site of a monument to the late distinguished President of the Academy. I added that "Lord Leighton was a personal friend of my own, but I have yet to learn that he was the sort of man who would have wished to usurp the place of any one, or that he would have even admitted that an artist, however distinguished, takes precedence in the nation's history of those heroes to whom the existence of our Empire is due. I rather think from what I knew of Lord Leighton's character that had such a hypothesis been presented to him in his lifetime his answer would have been like that of her gracious Majesty the Queen, who, it is reported, when it was suggested to her that Queen Anne's statue should be moved to make room for one of herself, replied, 'Certainly not; why, you would be proposing to move myself next.'"

Then, on 12th July, 1897, Mr. Balfour stated in the House of Commons that "the Dean and Chapter, after reviewing all the circumstances of the case, had decided not to carry out

their intention of relegating the Burges Memorial to the crypt." *The Times* remarked that "The public will be interested to know that among the circumstances which have brought about this welcome change of purpose an important place must be assigned to an appeal by the Prince of Wales. His Royal Highness holds very strongly the opinion that if memorials are to be liable to removal in this summary manner whenever the taste of a later generation pronounces them unsightly, the door will be opened to grave abuses. He accordingly expressed to the Dean and Chapter his hope that they would see their way to retain the Burges Memorial in its present position, and it is largely in deference to his wishes that the monument remains where it was erected at the expense of the nation."

So the good Dean was fated still to be scandalised by the "unsuitable" spectacle of the gallant captain "making love to Victory over a gun"; although, personally, I doubt if Captain Burges's statue is really doing anything of the kind.

In January, 1897, I had the honour of being appointed A.D.C. to the Queen. In July, 1897, when the intention of the Duke and Duchess of York to visit Ireland was announced, I seized the opportunity to advocate a project which I had long desired to see adopted, and for whose adoption, in fact, I am still hoping. That project is the building of a Royal residence in Ireland. It has hitherto been foiled by timid Ministers. Writing to *The Times* (24th July, 1897), I pointed out that the total sojourn of the Royal Family in Ireland during the past sixty years had been fifty-nine days in all. The letter continues: "In my humble opinion it is impossible to overrate the harm that this apparent neglect has done to the cause of loyalty in Ireland. I am convinced that many misfortunes and misunderstandings would never have taken place if the Royal Family had been permitted by Governments and courtiers to make more frequent visits to Ireland, and to render such visits possible by the establishment of a Royal residence in that country. I know for a fact that Her Majesty has on one occasion, and I believe more,

made strenuous efforts to obtain a Royal residence in Ireland. Her Majesty's generous wish was never fulfilled, owing to opposition on the part of her advisers, who have invariably entertained an ungenerous and unworthy doubt of the Irish character. . . . Vice-regal rule from the Castle at Dublin is hated with all the passion of resentment of a generous-minded but impulsive people, who possibly regard it as placing them on the same footing as the conquered and coloured races under British domination. It must not be inferred that I in any way intend to say a word against the present or preceding Viceroys of Ireland. I only wonder that men could ever have been found with patriotism enough to fill the office; but in common with patriotic Irishmen of all parties, I object to the sham court of the rule of men who, so far from really representing the Sovereign, represent merely the political party which has the upper hand in England at the time of their holding office—unlike the Viceroy of India, who holds office for a term of years independent of the political party that appointed him. . . . I believe Irishmen would like to have Royalty permanently among them, and to see Ireland put on an equal footing with the rest of the United Kingdom in these matters."

The project was received with the general approval of the public, in so far as their opinion was represented by the Press. The truth was, the Queen often wished to go to Ireland; but her Ministers prevented her from visiting my country; and their action was keenly resented by Irishmen. Personally, I protested against it; affirming what I believe to be the fact, that the Irish are the most chivalrous people in the world. In her sentiment towards my country, and in all her dealings with the Irish, Her Majesty was invariably most charming. It is very much to be regretted that the anomaly of Castle government was not ended long ago: that it must be ended, is certain.

The Duke and Duchess of York, visiting Ireland in August, 1897, were received with the greatest possible enthusiasm. The township of Kingstown presented an

helping me. Lord Marcus accompanied me to a meeting, and I told him that he must make a speech.

"I can't," he said. "I don't know what to say."

I told him to begin, because he was sure to be interrupted, and then, being an Irishman, he would certainly find something to say. Lord Marcus thereupon rose to his feet; and a voice immediately shouted:

"Who are ye?"

It was enough. The fire kindled.

"Who are we?" cried Lord Marcus. "I'll tell you who we are. We are three brothers, and our names are Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And we have come here to put out the burning fiery Furness!"

There was a good deal of excitement during the election, and sometimes stones would be flying. A cousin of mine, a lady, was driving along the street, when a stone lodged in her bonnet. Lord William caused it to be mounted in silver, upon which was inscribed the legend: "This proves that our opponents left no stone unturned to win the York election"; and presented it to the lady to use as a paperweight.

It was a close contest indeed. On the night of the poll, the Mayor most unfortunately succumbed to the strain and died suddenly.

In the result I won the seat by a majority of 11 (after two counts), on a poll of over 11,000 votes.

When I had taken my seat in the House, a political opponent whose opinions were as changeable as the wind, who had held high office, and who was distinguished by a handsome and majestic presence, said to me in the smoking-room:

"Well, my dear Charlie, you have not much of the appearance of a statesman."

"My dear old friend," I said, "you must not judge by appearances. You have not the appearance of a weathercock—but you are one."

At Christmas, 1908, Mr. Henniker Heaton's indomitable

perseverance had resulted in the establishment of Imperial penny postage in every part of the British Empire except Australia and New Zealand. Lord Randolph Churchill and myself were hearty supporters of Mr. Henniker Heaton, who gave to each of us a golden penny in commemoration of the event.

## CHAPTER XLII

## COVETED CHINA

### NOTE

AS the significance of Lord Charles Beresford's doings in China cannot be appreciated save in the light of the knowledge of the international situation in 1898, a brief analysis of it may here serve the convenience of the reader.

The governing factor of the problem was the fear of Russian ambition and of Russian aggrandisement. Both Russia and Great Britain are great Oriental Powers. The Asiatic possessions or dependencies of Russia consisted of over six million square miles, containing a population of about thirteen millions. The Asiatic possessions or dependencies of Great Britain consisted of something over one and a half million square miles, containing a population of some three hundred millions. A comparison between the two demonstrates this remarkable disparity: that whereas Russia had four times as much Asiatic territory as England, England ruled over thirteen times as many Asiatic people. The Russian pressure towards the seaboards, wealthy lands and vast populations of the East, extended along a line measuring 7600 miles, and verging all the way upon India, Turkey, Persia and China. In 1898, Russia was steadily advancing towards India, throwing forward railways through Central Asia, and at the same time inexorably thrusting the Trans-Siberian Railway towards Manchuria and the Amur regions. That line, which to-day bands the entire continent

from St. Petersburg to Vladivostock on the Sea of Japan, in 1898 had not reached within 500 miles of Irkutsk on Lake Baikal, which marks roughly two-thirds of the whole distance of 4000 miles from St. Petersburg to Vladivostock as the crow flies.

The vast, inscrutable, dreaded giant Russia, lying right across the top of Europe and Asia, was ever pushing downwards to the south upon Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan and China, and reaching an arm sideways to the east and the sea across the upper corner of China. The shoulders of the British Empire were taking some of the weight; and lest China should crack under it and fly asunder, many people were urging that England should prop up that passive and unwieldy bulk, Lord Salisbury standing back to back with the Son of Heaven.

The common interest was of course commercial. Great Britain had 64 per cent. of China's total foreign trade, with some £32,000,000 a year; had invested some hundreds of millions in the Far East; and was amiably and openly desirous to invest a great deal more in what was largely an unexplored and an immense field of profit. But she wanted security, first.

It was Lord Charles Beresford's business to discover what were the existing commercial conditions, how they might be improved and extended, and what was the security required for so much improvement and extension. This enterprise was known as the policy of the "Open Door"; for the British principle was that all nations should enjoy equal opportunities. The alternative policy was known as "Spheres of Influence," which virtually meant the partition of the Chinese Empire among the nations of Europe. Such was the Russian policy, in which she was supported, or was believed to have been supported, by both France and Germany. Russian diplomacy was active at Pekin; Russian agents were numerous in the trading centres of China; and it was constantly alleged at the time by students of the subject, that the Chinese Government regarded Russia as a more

powerful friend than England. In the light of subsequent experience, it would perhaps be more accurate to say that whereas China hated and distrusted all foreigners, she hated and distrusted the English less than the Russians, but that the vacillations and inconsistencies of British policy had inspired her rulers with a deep suspicion.

A good deal of nonsense, inspired by a large and generous ignorance of Chinese conditions and affairs, was talked and written in 1898. China was represented as an eccentric barbarian of great size, of uncertain temper, but on the whole amenable to good advice, who was merely waiting pathetically for the English to teach him what to do and how to do it.

In truth, China, in 1898, that is, political China, while haunted by a dread of foreign aggression, was intensely occupied with her own affairs. These were indeed exigent enough. In the summer of 1898, occurred the Hundred Days of Reform, followed by the *coup d'état*, and the imprisonment of the Emperor. The visit of Lord Charles Beresford to China coincided with the triumph of the reactionary Conservative party at Court and the restoration to absolute power of the Empress Dowager, Tsu Hsi. The history of the affair is related in detail by Messrs. J. O. P. Bland and E. Backhouse, in their work, *China under the Empress Dowager* (Heinemann, 1910); but its intricacies were not divulged at the time. A study of the correspondence contained in the Blue Books of the period reveals the singular innocence of the British diplomatic methods employed at this critical moment.

The Emperor, Kuang-Hsu, who had always been at variance with his astute and powerful aunt, the Empress Dowager, the real ruler of China for fifty years, had expoused the cause of the Reform, or Chinese, party of the South, as distinguished from the Manchu, or Conservative, party of the North.

The enmity of the South towards the North, the latent inbred hostility of the Chinese to the Manchu, had been

roused to violence by the defeat of China by Japan in the war of 1894–5. It was very well known that the Empress Dowager had spent the money allocated to the Navy and other departments of State upon the rebuilding of the Summer Palace at Pekin and other æsthetic diversions. But the Empress Dowager, with her habitual skill, contrived to shift the responsibility for the disaster upon the puppet Emperor, who in fact was guiltless of it. The injustice so exasperated the young man, that he joined the Reform Party, and issued Decree after Decree, all of which were tinctured with Western ideas, and all of which were expressly repugnant to the Empress Dowager. Tzu Hsi, however, approved the Decrees without remark, biding her time. It came. The Emperor was induced to assent to a plot to seize the person of the Empress Dowager, and afterwards to sequester his terrible aunt for the rest of her life.

Now came the intromission of Yuan Shih Kai, who had been Imperial Resident in Corea. In 1898, he was Judicial Commissioner of Chihli, and exerted considerable influence at Court. Yuan Shih Kai, professing great interest in reform, won the confidence of the Emperor; who, believing that in Yuan he had gained an adherent at Court, informed him of the details of the conspiracy. That design included the assassination of Yung Lu. Now Yung Lu was Governor-General of Chihli, commander-in-chief of the foreign-drilled army, which was one of the efficient armies in China, an old friend and a loyal servant of the Empress Dowager, and altogether a most formidable person. The Emperor's plan was to slay Yung Lu swiftly, to put himself at the head of Yung Lu's ten thousand soldiers, and then to march with them upon Pekin and seize the Empress Dowager. All might have gone well, had not Yuan Shih Kai (according to Messrs. Bland and Backhouse) been blood-brother to Yung Lu, and also, presumably, loyal to the Empress Dowager. In any case, Yuan went straightway to Yung Lu and divulged the plot.

The next day, it was the Emperor Kuang Hsu, and not his aunt, who was ceremoniously escorted to prison.

Six of the conspirators were subsequently executed. Another, Kang Yu Wei, escaped under British protection in October, 1898. Dr. Sun Yat-sen was another fugitive. It was in October, 1898, that Lord Charles Beresford arrived at Pekin.

The Empress Dowager resumed the Regency and therewith the formal investiture of that supreme power which she had exercised since, as a girl of twenty-two, a lady in waiting at Court in the time of the Emperor Hsien-Feng, she had unofficially assumed the conduct of affairs, and which she continued to wield until the end. Yung Lu was appointed to be member of the Grand Council, and Minister of War. When he was in Pekin, Lord Charles Beresford had an interesting conversation with Yung Lu.

The Emperor Kuang Hsu remained imprisoned in his palace in the Ocean Terrace at Pekin; and it was rumoured throughout the South that he would presently die. Whether or not the Empress Dowager desired his death, she considered it politic, having regard to the anger which his dethronement inspired in the South, to keep him alive. Moreover, the British Minister, referring to the reports that "the Empress Dowager was about to proceed to extreme steps in regard to the Emperor," solemnly suggested that any such course of action would be highly repugnant to the susceptibilities of Foreign Powers.

Such, briefly indicated, was the posture of affairs in 1898, when the British Government was being urged to initiate a definite policy in China, and when Lord Charles Beresford went to investigate commercial conditions in that puzzling Empire. But the British Government had the rest of the world to consider, as well.

In the preceding year, 1897, it was announced that Russia would winter at Port Arthur; whereupon Lord Charles Beresford remarked in the House of Commons that the winter would probably be of long duration. Germany

was in occupation of Kiao Chao, originally demanded as compensation for the murder of a German missionary—a most profitable martyrdom. There were troubles on the Indian frontier; there was fighting in Crete, and consequently there was danger of a war breaking out between Greece and Turkey. It is sufficiently obvious that, under such conditions—at a time when the European nations were each waiting to take of China what it could get; when Russia was more or less in agreement with France and Germany; and when England stood alone;—any very definite move on her part might have led to bigger difficulties than she cared to encounter. At any rate, peace was maintained; the policy of the "Open Door" prevailed; and the influence exerted by Lord Charles Beresford upon international affairs, although perhaps not to be defined, was considerable. For further information concerning this epoch, the student may be referred to *China under the Empress Dowager*, by Messrs. J. O. P. Bland and E. Backhouse (Heinemann, 1910); *China in Transformation*, by A. R. Colquhoun (Harper, 1898); and the Blue-book *China. No. 1 (1899) C.—9131.*

While one British admiral, Rear-Admiral Noel, stopped the trouble in Crete, which had defeated the united intellect of Europe for generations; another, Rear-Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, was employed in conducting a swifter, more thorough and more practical investigation into the commercial, military and social conditions of China than had ever before been accomplished; so that its results, set forth at the time in the admiral's many speeches and afterwards in his book *The Break-up of China*, struck the two great English-speaking peoples of the world, the British and the American nations, with something of the force of a revelation.

## CHAPTER XLIII

## THE INTROMISSION OF THE ADMIRALS

IN August, 1898, I received from the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain, whose President was Sir Stafford Northcote, an invitation to proceed on their behalf to China, "to obtain accurate information as to how security is to be ensured to commercial men who may be disposed to embark their capital in trade enterprise in China." Sir Stafford Northcote added that he desired to obtain a report on these matters from a "non-official source," and that, further, it should be supplied by an officer of naval or military experience, by reason of the importance of the question of adequate protection for British commercial ventures.

Accompanied by Mr. Robin Grey, who acted as an additional secretary, and by my secretary, Mr. Macdonald, I sailed for China towards the end of August. My commission, to report on the future prospects of British trade and commerce in China and especially to what extent the Chinese Government would guarantee the safe employment of British capital, was sufficiently wide in its scope.

At that time, there was much public discussion concerning the rivalry manifesting itself among the European nations interested in China, particularly with regard to railway concessions and like privileges. The public in general were of opinion that the British Government was very slow to assert British rights. In July, 1898, Sir Claude Macdonald, British Plenipotentiary at the Court of Pekin, was "authorised to inform the Chinese Government that Her Majesty's Govern-

ment will support them in resisting any Power which commits an act of aggression on China or on account of China having granted permission to make or support any railway or public work to a British subject."

This was something, but it was not much; for China, comparing British assurances with Russian actions, entertained her own opinion concerning their comparative value. Nevertheless, the British policy was quite definitely the policy of the "Open Door"; which Mr. Balfour defined (10th August, 1898) as "the right of importing goods at the same rate that every nation imports goods, the same right of using railways that other nations possess. In other words, equal trade opportunities." The alternative policy of "Spheres of Influence," Mr. Balfour oracularly described as "a wholly different set of questions connected with concessions, and they cannot be treated in the same simple and obvious manner." But in what the treatment should consist, the public were not told.

It was not, perhaps, understood by the public at the time, how delicate was the international situation, nor how serious might be the consequences, not only of hasty action but, of any decisive action; and although it did not necessarily follow that nothing should be done, the difficulties and complications, many of which were known only to the Government, should be taken into consideration.

Russia was establishing herself in Manchuria, and was arming Port Arthur and Talienwan. Germany had declined to pledge herself not to levy preferential duties at Kiao Chao, and claimed exclusive rights over railway construction through the Shantung Province. France was claiming preferential rights with regard to her leasehold in Southern China. France and Russia were interesting themselves in the sanctioned trunk line from Pekin to Hankow and from Hankow to the south.

Nothing was settled with regard to the important question of the rights over the Yangtse basin.

Lord Salisbury had stated that he did not consider it to

be the duty of Her Majesty's Government to make railways in China, or to find the money to make them; and both Lord Salisbury and Mr. Curzon (afterwards Viscount Curzon of Kedleston) affirmed that the failure of British syndicates to apply for concessions in China was due to their lack of initiative.

On the other hand, it was argued in the Press that the lack of initiative on the part of British enterprise was due to the lack of support and to the absence of a definite policy on the part of the Government, a criticism which, among others, was formulated by Sir Edward Grey, who was then of course in Opposition.

At the same time, underlying these controversies, there was the consciousness that detailed practical information concerning the real posture of affairs in China was lacking. Under these conditions, considerable responsibility attached to the task upon which I had entered. Its rapid and successful fulfilment clearly depended upon the method of its organisation. Before starting, a letter was addressed by me to every Chamber of Commerce in China, requesting it to prepare a report giving details of:

1. The State of British trade now.
2. The state of British trade ten years ago.
3. The state of foreign trade.
4. Increase and decrease of trade.

By this means, the reports were ready for me upon my arrival; and I was immediately placed in possession of the material which served to guide my inquiries and upon which I could base my observations. As these are set forth in detail in my book *The Break-up of China*, published by Messrs. Harper and Brothers in 1899, and as the conditions have since changed, I do not propose to repeat them at length in these pages. I have here to acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. Harper and Brothers in granting me permission to quote from *The Break-up of China*.

I wrote that work in thirty-one days; a feat of which I was

not unjustly proud; for it was a long book, crammed with facts and statistics, extracted from a pile of memoranda and documents three feet high. I used to ride before breakfast in Richmond Park; after breakfast, I worked all day until 7.30; and when I had finished the book, I said I would never write another.

While I was on my way to China—while all the Chambers of Commerce in China were hard at it compiling reports for me—a brother officer, Rear-Admiral Noel, was engaged in settling, in his own supreme way, a difficulty which had long exercised the Chancelleries of Europe in vain, and which might at any moment have given rise to what are called European complications.

In January, 1897, broke out the insurrection of the Christians in Crete; which, put shortly, was the result of two centuries of oppression under Moslem rule. During the previous year (to go no farther back) the Sultan of Turkey, at the request of the Powers of Europe, had promised to introduce certain reforms. As these were not carried into execution, the Cretan Christians, encouraged thereto by Greece and aided by Greek soldiery, rose in rebellion. Roughly speaking, the Christians held the country districts, and the Turkish garrison, reinforced by an irregular and undisciplined horde of Bashi-Bazouks, occupied the towns. No doubt but Turkey could have put down the revolt by extensive bloodshed; but the Powers of Europe had forbidden the Sultan either to reinforce his garrison in Crete, or (at first) to make war upon the insurgents. The Powers were therefore morally bound to restore order themselves. Recognising this obligation, they dispatched men-of-war to Crete. Italy, France, Russia, Austria, Great Britain and Germany were represented. Vice-Admiral Count N. Canevaro, the Italian, being senior officer, was president of the Council of Admirals. Great Britain was represented by Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Harris. The admirals arrived off Canea in February, 1897; intercepted and sent away a Greek squadron of reinforcements;

established a blockade; and proceeded, as best they might, to enforce order. They succeeded for the time being; but it was not within their province to attempt a radical remedy. So long as the Turks remained in Crete, so long would the trouble continue. The Christians dared not resume their occupations, for fear of a further outbreak of Moslem aggression, when they could not rely upon the Turkish garrison for protection; the Moslems, dreading Christian reprisals, clung to the Turkish troops as their only salvation.

In the face of this dilemma, Germany and Austria withdrew from the concert, and the island remained in charge of Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy, each Power being assigned a district. Great Britain retained Candia, where the British garrison was reduced to one regiment, the Highland Light Infantry. The discontent, temporarily quelled, soon became acute.

The decision of the Council of Admirals to collect a proportion of the export duties aroused intense indignation. When, on 6th September, 1898, the British came to take over the Custom House at Candia, the mob rose, attacked the tiny force of British seamen and soldiers and the British camp and hospital, and massacred some 500 Christians in the town. The British fought like heroes and lost heavily; but for the moment they were helpless; the only man-of-war off Candia being the gunboat *Hazard*.

Then, on 11th September, Rear-Admiral Gerard Noel (now Admiral of the Fleet Sir Gerard H. U. Noel, G.C.B., K.C.M.G.), who had relieved Sir Robert Harris early in the year, arrived at Candia in H.M.S. *Revenge*. The next day, he landed, inspected the scenes of the recent fighting, and ordered the Turkish governor, Edhem Pasha, to repair on board the *Revenge*.

Admiral Noel required the governor to demolish all houses from which the insurgents had fired upon the British camp and hospital; to give up to British troops certain forts and positions; and to surrender the principal persons concerned in the rioting and attack. The admiral also in-

formed the governor that the Moslem population would be disarmed.

The governor broke into a cold perspiration and accepted the admiral's demands. He was then suffering under the delusion that he could evade them. He never made a bigger mistake. When he tried to avoid the demolition of the houses, he was suddenly confronted with the spectacle of two hundred British seamen coming ashore to do the work, and hurriedly gave in. When he endeavoured to postpone the delivery of the prisoners, he was informed that if they were not delivered by the hour appointed, they would be taken. His every excuse and pretext were met by the same composed and invincible determination. At the last moment, when the scaffold awaiting the malefactors stood stark upon the highest point of the bastions, Edhem Pasha's frantic plea for delay was received by a terse intimation that if he did not hang the prisoners, he, Edhem Pasha, would himself be hanged.

The disturbers of peace were hanged at the precise time appointed; and swung in a row until sundown, in sight of all the city. Twice again the bodies of murderers darkened above the ramparts, to the abiding terror of evil-doers.

The Powers ordered the evacuation of the island by the Turks within a month, which expired on 5th December. On the evening of the 4th, some 600 troops had still to leave, together with their women, horses and baggage. Admiral Noel ordered the baggage to be embarked on board the British transport *Ocampo* and a small Turkish transport that night. Next day, the governor, Shefket Bey (who had succeeded Edhem Pasha), informed the admiral that he had received orders from the Governor of Crete to keep the remaining troops and to disembark the baggage. What followed is described in an account of the affair contributed by "A Naval Officer" to *The United Service Magazine*, February, 1899.

"An armed boat was sent to prevent interference with

the Turkish transport. The admiral signalled to the Fleet: 'Prepare to man and arm boats. I intend to compel the Turkish troops to embark by force after noon'; and to the commandant of British troops, 'All Turkish troops remaining in the town after noon are to be made prisoners and compelled to embark at the quay.'"

It was a bold decision, worthy of the Royal Navy. For all the admiral knew, the Turks might have fought, in which case they would have been reinforced by some thousands of Bashi-Bazouks. But they gave in, and were marched on board. Their "furniture, beds, pianos, carpets and general loot and rubbish, making a pile as big as a frigate," says the eye-witness aforesaid, "which, together with nearly three hundred horses, was bundled into boats and lighters by the seamen of the *Revenge* and *Empress of India*, and stowed away on board the transports, the work taking all night."

Thus did Rear-Admiral Gerard Noel cut the knot which all the diplomatists in Europe had failed to unloose. The Marquess of Salisbury publicly complimented the admirals upon their diplomatic ability, saying that he wished the Cabinets of Europe could work together with equal unanimity and rapidity.

In December, 1908, H.R.H. Prince George of Greece took over the government of Crete from the admirals.

The settlement of the Cretan difficulty undoubtedly exercised an appreciable effect upon the international situation, with which my own enterprise in China was necessarily connected. For Admiral Noel had removed what had been a chronic danger to the peace of Europe; and in so doing had demonstrated that combined action on the part of the Great Powers (if entrusted to naval officers) could be both cordially conducted and successfully accomplished. I have recalled the affair, not only because it gives me pleasure to record the ability, courage and resolution of my old friend and brother officer, but because no account of the time, lacking the Cretan episode, can be wholly intelligible. For,

although it is consistently neglected by political historians, whose views are usually distorted by party, it remains, and will remain, a classic example of the consummate exercise of British sea-power for the inspiration and instruction of honest men.

## CHAPTER XLIV

# TRAFFICS AND DISCOVERIES

## I. China

### THE MISFORTUNES OF KANG YU WEI

ON my way up to Pekin, I visited Hong Kong, arriving there on 30th September. The island of Hong Kong, being British territory, is a city of refuge; to which sanctuary, just before my arrival, had fled Kang Yu Wei, the leader of the Reform Party. To the influence of Kang Yu Wei may be ascribed the conversion of the young Emperor, Kuang Hsu, to Reform; and the issue by the Son of Heaven of the series of Decrees, during the Hundred Days of Reform of the preceding summer. The movement culminated in the plot to seize the person of the Empress Dowager, which was frustrated by the *coup d'état*. But before that decisive event occurred, Kang Yu Wei, receiving a broad hint from the Emperor that his arrest had been ordered by the Empress Dowager, took the next train from Pekin to Tongku, and embarked on board the coasting steamer *Chungking* bound for Shanghai.

The Taotai at Shanghai informed Acting-Consul-General Brenan that he had received orders to arrest Kang Yu Wei upon his arrival, and that a reward of 2000 dollars was offered for his capture, and requested Mr. Brenan to search for the fugitive in all British ships arriving at Shanghai. By this time the Chinese detectives and policemen were so wildly excited by the prospect of securing 2000 dollars, that Mr. Brenan feared they would attempt forcibly to

board British ships before they entered the harbour. He therefore determined to intercept the *Chungking* before the Chinese officials could reach her; but desiring to avoid the open implication of the Consulate in the matter, he accepted the services volunteered by Mr. J. O. P. Bland (joint author of *China under the Empress Dowager*). Mr. Bland, who spoke Chinese, took a steam-launch, met the *Chungking* some miles out at sea, transhipped Kang Yu Wei, and put him on board the P. and O. steamer *Ballaarat*, then lying outside Woosung. Captain Field, commanding the *Ballaarat*, placed an armed sentry upon Kang Yu Wei's cabin. The people in the *Chungking*, knowing that H.M.S. *Esk* was at Woosung, told the Chinese officials at Shanghai that Kang Yu Wei had been put on board her. This information diverted attention from the *Ballaarat* for the moment.

The Chinese officials, however, eventually determined to follow the *Ballaarat* in a gunboat, when, two days later (29th September), the *Ballaarat* sailed for Hong Kong. The British authorities, learning also that two more Chinese gunboats were ordered to lie in wait for the P. and O. boat, arranged that she should be escorted to Hong Kong by H.M. cruiser *Bonaventure*, commanded by my old friend and brother-in-arms in the Soudan campaign, Captain R. A. J. Montgomerie. Being pursued by the Chinese gunboat, Montgomerie cleared for action; luckily for them, the Chinese declined to risk an affair with one of the finest fighting officers in Her Majesty's service; and Kang Yu Wei was landed in safety at Hong Kong. Here, Major-General Black placed him under police protection. The procedure followed by Captain Montgomerie in accordance with the orders of Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Seymour, then commander-in-chief on the China station, not only saved the life of the patriot Kang Yu Wei, but prevented the occurrence of the difficulties which would have arisen had the Chinese attempted to board the *Ballaarat*.

With the object of ascertaining the views of the Reform Party concerning the future of China and its relation to the

extension of trade and commerce, I invited Kang Yu Wei to visit me. He arrived surrounded by a bodyguard of policemen, for a price was set on his head. Apparently the poor man felt it already loose, for, as he talked, he kept turning it over his shoulder; and little wonder; for it was only three or four days since his brother and five of his colleagues had been executed in Pekin.

"Reforms in the East," said Kang Yu Wei, "invariably demanded martyrs; and, if China did not go to pieces in the meantime, posterity would honour the six dead gentlemen." In reply to my question as to the present position of the Reform Party, he said it was "completely crushed, but not killed," and would ere long revive; a prophecy which has been fulfilled.

Kang Yu Wei affirmed that, contrary to the general opinion abroad, all educated Chinamen believed that Reform alone could prevent the dissolution of an Empire 4000 years old; that by degrees the mass of the people were accepting the new doctrines; that the Reformers relied upon Great Britain to help them to carry their schemes into execution; and that, were they to attain power, they would certainly open China to the trade and commerce of the world, because such a policy would increase the strength and riches of the Empire.

The impression left upon my mind by Kang Yu Wei was that he was loyal, patriotic, and unselfishly devoted to his country, and undoubtedly he was in earnest.

In the course of many conversations held with the compradors (managers) of the great mercantile houses in China, I ascertained that, while several of them were frankly in favour of Reform, all of them agreed that the Reformers had acted in haste, neglecting to prepare their way by means of careful organisation.

### THE CHINESE NEW MODEL

Arriving at Pekin on 16th October, 1898, I was kindly invited by Sir Claude Macdonald, British Minister Pleni-

FROM AN ORIGINAL DRAWING BY PHIL MAY IN THE POSSESSION OF THE AUTHOR

potentiary, to stay at the Legation. To all Foreign Ministers accredited to Pekin I paid my respects and presented my credentials, which were given to me by the President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain, Sir Stafford Northcote, and which showed that I had been asked to make a report on British trade and commerce, its future development, and what security existed throughout the Chinese Empire for such trade and commerce.

On 20th October, I visited the Tsung-li Yamen; a body created, in 1861, for the purpose of conducting diplomatic negotiations with the representatives of Foreign Powers, and consisting of eight members, of whom three are Manchus and five are Chinese. I was presented to Prince Ching, the President, and was requested to address the members. In my speech, I dwelt upon the anxiety as to the future on the part of British traders on account of the want of security for capital, and the ignoring of treaties by the Chinese; suggested that, unless China organised her military and police forces in order to give security for trade and commerce, foreign countries would adopt the policy embodied in the expression "Spheres of Influence"; affirmed that the British desired no addition to be made to the British Empire, either in the nature of dominion, sphere of influence, or protectorate; explained that what the commercial communities desired was free and uninterrupted opportunities for trade, with equal rights and privileges for all the nations of the world, a policy expressed by the words "Open Door"; and stated that in order to establish such a policy, it was essential that China should maintain her integrity.

Prince Ching asked me how I thought trade and commerce could be better protected that it was at present.

I replied that the only effective method would be thoroughly to reorganise the Chinese army, abolishing the system of maintaining provincial armies; that, as Great Britain had 64 per cent. of the whole foreign trade of China, she was naturally anxious as to its adequate security; and that it was possible that the British Government would allow

a British officer to assist the Chinese in putting their army in order; adding that I had no official authority whatever to make the statement, but merely put it forward as a suggestion. I also suggested that should the Chinese Government consider the proposal, it might be well for them to invite other nations which had large trading interests with China, to lend a few officers and non-commissioned officers to work with the British in the reorganisation of the army.

Prince Ching observed that they already had German officers to drill some of their troops; and that Captain Lang, the British naval officer, was in the Chinese service to help them to organise their Fleet. He did not mention, however, what I afterwards discovered, that Captain Lang had found the admiral sitting on the quarter-deck playing fan-tan with his own sentry. Captain Lang subsequently resigned his appointment.

When Prince Ching and some members of the Tsung-li Yamen returned my visit, Prince Ching informed me that the Emperor and the Empress Dowager approved of my suggestions; and that his Excellency Chung Chi Tung, Viceroy of Hunan and Hupeh, had been ordered to have 2000 of his troops ready to be placed under a British officer for drill and organisation, as an experiment, which might possibly lead to the reorganisation of the army as a whole. I replied that as I was in no way authorised to take any responsibility with regard to this matter, any action taken on the part of the Tsung-li Yamen must go through the British Minister to the British Government. Prince Ching said that it was the intention of the Tsung-li Yamen formally to inform Sir Claude Macdonald of the wishes of the Chinese Government.

My interpreter on these occasions was Mr. Fulford of the British Legation, and all that passed between myself and the high Chinese officials in Pekin was made known by Mr. Fulford to the British Minister.

The question of providing adequate security for British subjects and for British trade and commerce, was thus

frankly raised at the beginning. Indeed, all hinged upon its solution. The safety of life and property always depends ultimately upon disciplined force. The force at the disposal of the Chinese Government was scattered, ill-organised and largely inefficient. But, with the men, money and resources actually available, it would have been perfectly feasible to have formed an army of a million men. Such was my view at the time, and I have seen no reason to change it since.

At the request of the Tsung-li Yamen, I drew up the entire scheme complete in every detail for the organisation of the Chinese army; and on several occasions it was discussed with me by the Chinese Ministers at great length.

Briefly described, my scheme was based upon the principle upon which the Imperial Maritime Customs had been formed. The Imperial Maritime Customs was charged with the duty of collecting Custom House dues, which were hypothecated to secure the external indebtedness of China. All nations were represented upon it, and, because Great Britain possessed by far the larger share of Chinese trade, a British officer was placed at its head. The business was impartially managed under the Chinese Government for the common welfare of China and of other nations; and in the result the arrangement worked admirably.

The proposal was, then, to organise the army upon the same basis; appointing officers of those nations who owned interests in China; and, as Great Britain possessed the largest interests, placing a British officer in command under the Chinese Government. Under these conditions, the army would be enabled to secure China both against foreign aggression and internal disturbance. In a word, it would ensure stable government. Under existing conditions, stable government was impossible; for the methods of the Empress Dowager consisted in playing off one party against another, and one viceroy against another. Tsu Hsi succeeded in maintaining her personal ascendancy; but at the cost of so weakening the State, that it was liable to fall a prey to foreign ambition and foreign cupidity.

The Chinese high officials argued the whole subject with great acumen. They objected that the commander-in-chief might embark upon a career of personal aggrandisement. I replied that as he would be under the Chinese Government, and that as he would be further restricted by his dependence upon an international body of officers, there could be no such danger. And I asked the Chinese whether they had any reason to be dissatisfied with Sir Robert Hart's administration of the Customs. They answered at once that his services were invaluable to China, and said that he worked so hard in Chinese interests that "he might have been a Chinaman."

I then pointed out that a British officer at the head of the army would occupy the same position with regard to the army as Sir Robert Hart occupied with regard to the Customs; offered to select for them the best general I could find for the executive command; and informed them that I was myself prepared to undertake the administrative command.

The objection that the creation of such an army might offend foreign susceptibilities, was also met by the argument that foreign officers would command it.

In reply to a courteous question, I stated that my object in proposing the scheme was to benefit China; and that the reason why I desired to benefit China was that an improvement in Chinese administration must necessarily profit British interests.

I also discussed the subject with his Excellency Yung Lu, he who had executed the *coup d'état* which resulted in the defeat of the Reformers and the imprisonment of the Emperor Kuang Hsu. Yung Lu, who commanded one of the foreign-drilled armies, stated that the reorganisation of the Chinese army under British and foreign officers would be carried into execution; and asked me whether, supposing that China put the whole of her armies under British officers, Great Britain would assist her in any quarrel that might arise between her and any other Power.

The direct question was highly significant.

My reply, of course, was that I was unable to discuss political questions; but that Great Britain had no desire to involve herself in quarrels which might arise among other countries.

Yung Lu courteously invited me to visit the military forces then quartered round Pekin; a privilege of which I afterwards availed myself.

Having formulated my scheme for the reorganisation of the Chinese army, founded upon a general knowledge of the requirements of the situation, I proceeded to fulfil in detail that part of my instructions received from the President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce directing me to report "whether the organisation of the Chinese civil and military administration is sufficiently complete to ensure adequate protection to commercial ventures." Accordingly, I visited all the forts and arsenals forming the coast and river defences of the Chinese Empire, and utilised the opportunities, most courteously extended to me by the various viceroys, of inspecting the Imperial military forces.

For the sake of simplicity, the results of my investigations into military and naval conditions are here grouped together; although these investigations were necessarily conducted side by side with my inquiries into commercial affairs, the two elements being often present in the same locality.

China's military forces were then sharply divided between Manchu and Chinese, or North and South. The Manchu, or Northern, forces were manned and officered entirely by Manchus, and enjoyed privileges which were denied to the Chinese army. Nearly every Southern army was commanded by two generals, a Manchu and a Chinese, the Manchu being the real head.

The Provincial armies are maintained at the expense of the viceroys. In the Province of Chihli, General Yuan Shih Kai's army, and the Imperial armies at and around Pekin, are maintained by the Board of Revenue out of

Imperial taxes; so that the Imperial armies permanently quartered round Pekin are State-paid. The generals in command of the Provinces administer their armies entirely according to their own discretion. As these officers are responsible for the payment and maintenance of the forces under their command, much of the money which should go to the army is apt to stick with its general.

When I mentioned these circumstances to the members of the Tsung-li Yamen, one of them blandly asked me if I included *his* army in my description.

I replied that his Excellency could not but be aware that he received supplies of pay, clothes and rice for an establishment of 10,000, although the actual number was one half or less; and that when his army was inspected, he filled the ranks by hiring coolies for the occasion. My response evoked an irreverent outburst of applause from the interested audience of coolies. "The English Mandarin," they cried, "knows all about our old mandarins! That is just what happens."

### YUAN SHIH KAI

In October, 1898, I went to Hsiao Chao to visit Yuan Shih Kai, the high official who informed Yung Lu of the plot of the Reformers to seize the Empress Dowager, and so brought about the *coup d'état.* I remained two days and a night with the general; witnessed the parade of all his troops, and their manœuvres, and examined their equipment and victualling. I was permitted to examine the pay-sheets, and obtained every detail connected with the establishment and maintenance of the force.

General Yuan Shih Kai is a Chinaman, and his army was composed of Chinese. It numbered 7400 men. They appeared to be smart, of fine physique, well fed, and their uniforms were well kept. Their parade and manœuvres were smartly executed, their discipline was excellent. All their equipment was serviceable and efficient, with the exception of their artillery.

It was on this occasion that I had a conversation with Yuan Shih Kai, which, in the light of subsequent events in China, it may be not uninteresting to recall.

Yuan Shih Kai expressed his anxiety concerning the future of his country; which, he said, was in a lamentable state of weakness, and which the States of Europe were desirous of dividing among themselves; and in this connection he was inclined favourably to regard the proposal to combine the various Chinese armies into one great Imperial force.

Upon that, I asked Yuan if he were acquainted with the history of China. Being one of the governing class, and therefore a scholar of the ancient meticulous pedantic class, he probably knew the whole of it by heart; and he replied in the affirmative.

"Then," I said, "have you not observed that every Chinese dynasty has been founded by a successful general?"

The man who is now (1913) President of the Chinese Republic looked at me impassive as a statue, and held his peace.

Yuan Shih Kai was well aware of the fact that throughout the East the ruler is always "He," never "They"; and for this reason he subsequently endeavoured, after the death of the Empress Dowager, to preserve the authority of the Emperor.

Years afterwards, before leaving England for China, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, who was accompanied by General Homer Lea of the United States, lunched with me. General Homer Lea was, I think, to conduct the reorganisation of the Chinese army.

### ARMS AND MEN

The armies which I had the privilege of inspecting, or concerning which I obtained information, were: the army of General Sung, distributed along the coast about Kinchow, which apparently consisted of 10,000 men out of a paper strength of 20,000; the army of General Soon Ching at

Lutai, which was also at half strength, consisting of 7000 men out of 15,000, distributed among 30 camps, and having some Russian officers; and the army of General Tung Fu Chan, near Pekin, which was a disorderly and an undisciplined rabble; the army of General Nieh, which consisted of about 13,000 men, distributed among 30 camps between Hsiao Chao and Tientsin, with five Russian instructors; the Pekin Field Force, which was commanded from the Palace, and which consisted of 10,000 picked men, well armed but badly drilled; the cavalry camp at Kaiping, theoretically consisting of 1500 men, and having three Russian officers; and the army of General Yi Ke Tong, consisting of from 8000 to 15,000 men scattered about in Manchuria. I also saw the armies, or some part of them, of the Viceroys Chung Chai Tung, Liu Kwen Yi, Hsu Ying Kwei, Tau Chung Liu, and Kwei. Besides these, I was informed that there were in Mongolia 100,000 cavalry.

Among the various armies were distributed 14 different patterns of rifles, varying from the Mauser to the gingal. Some contingents were armed with bows and arrows; others carried bird-cages and fans, being distinguishable as soldiers only by their badge. The armies exhibited as many degrees of efficiency among themselves as their weapons.

Nevertheless, I came to the conclusion that here was all the material from which to evolve an excellent army. The Chinese have all the qualities of a good soldier: they are sober, obedient quick to learn and courageous. The requirements were proper food, pay, clothing, drill and competent officers.

While I was at Newchwang I obtained what information was available with regard to the numbers and location of the Russian troops in Eastern Siberia and in Manchuria. The total number was then about 12,000 men.

In the course of my inspection, at the Viceroy's invitation, of the powerful forts on the Yangtse River, I observed that one fort, which was intended to fire up the river, was so constructed that only one gun out of six could be trained in

the required direction, so that if the other guns were brought to bear, the guns' crews would be killed. The face of the fort, instead of being at right angles to the course of the river, was parallel to it. At my suggestion, a dummy figu was placed in position; a gun was fired in the required direction; and sure enough the shot blew the effigy to pieces and went wandering among the junks crowding the river. The Chinese said that the English Mandarin was the cleverest mandarin they had ever seen; and explained that the fort had not been built in the right position because the ground was swampy.

Among my observations of forts elsewhere, I noted a battery of 60-ton muzzle-loading guns, which were loaded by depressing their muzzles into the magazine. I ventured to suggest that any carelessness in sponging out the guns might result in the explosion of the magazine. The general said that the English Mandarin was extraordinarily clever; and explained that a year previously a magazine had been blown up for the very reason I had indicated, had killed forty-two men, and had then been rebuilt upon the same plan.

At another fort I noted that the powder used for the heavy guns was unsuitable, and ventured to suggest that it might burst the gun.

"Yes, it does," said the general simply. "We have lately blown the breech off two 12-inch 50-ton Krupp guns, killing and wounding thirty men." And he congratulated the English Mandarin upon his extraordinary powers of divination. After the general's explanation I understood how it was that in another fort two 12-inch Krupp guns were fitted with Armstrong breech mechanism. The Krupp breech having been blown off, the Shanghai arsenal had neatly fitted them with Armstrong breeches.

Observing that a powder-mill at Canton had open gratings for windows, and stood in the midst of a sandy plain, I ventured to suggest that the sand might blow in, and that a spark from it might cause an explosion.

"Yes, it does," said the mandarin. "It blew up two

years ago and killed and wounded twenty men." He added that although it had been rebuilt upon the same plan, it was not intended to use it again; and expressed his admiration for my remarkable penetration.

At one of the arsenals, the workman boring a 6-pounder gun had his speed too fast and his feed too thick, so that his machine was taking out chips of metal and jumping under the strain. My guide observed placidly that the man didn't seem to know how to do it. The European instructor, he explained, had left. I offered to replace him for the occasion; took off my coat; and being an old hand at the lathe, managed to set the machine right in about an hour's work. Then there suddenly arose a great crying and calling among the coolies outside. I thought a riot was beginning; but the tumult was only the coolies in their innocent way screaming their delight that "the English Mandarin could do what their own old mandarins couldn't."

I drew up a report with regard to the forts and arsenals in China. The general conclusion was that enormous sums of money were being expended on war material which, in most cases, was totally useless, although the establishments were often capable, under European instructors, of turning out work which would compare with the best in Europe. Two or three of these arsenals, rightly managed, would serve to equip a million men for less money than was already being expended.

### H.I.M. NAVY

I also visited the Chinese Navy, which was divided into two squadrons, the Peyang squadron in the North and the Nanyang squadron in the South. The Peyang squadron consisted of three cruisers, one torpedo cruiser, and one torpedo gunboat. The Nanyang squadron was composed of seven cruisers, four old gunboats, and four torpedo boats. The Fleet as a whole was undermanned, but there were many men who had been well trained by English instructors. The only dockyard is at Foochow.

Many Chinese authorities having asked my advice as to the fleet, I recommended them to put their ships in order for police purposes, and to utilise them for the purpose of checking piracy; advised them not to spend any more money on their navy, because their army was of greater importance; and pointed out the waste involved in keeping about the coasts and in the river hundreds of man-of-war junks.

Throughout China, I found among the high officials at least an ostensible agreement with my views concerning the necessity of reorganising the army: agreement which was no doubt largely dictated by the very present fear of Russian aggression.

His Excellency Li Hung Chang, whom I visited, was an exception to the rule; for the great Minister, one of the Six Grand Secretaries, was growing old and infirm; and having offended the Reform Party, it was not improbable that he was looking to Russia to protect him in case the Empress Dowager's support failed him. His case was typical of the Chinese attitude, in which the regard for personal wealth and safety, threatened so subtly and from so many dark quarters, is naturally apt to override patriotism.

At the same time, China is one of the most democratic countries in the world. I have seen the great Li Hung Chang stepping into the Yamen over the bodies of the coolies, who refused to move and who chaffed him as he passed. I have seen a whole Council huddle up their fans and disperse like startled poultry, because a coolie put his head in at the door and exhorted the old gentlemen to be quick, because it was going to rain, and the coolies were going home.

It is the rule of the road in China that all passengers must give way to carriers of burdens, and it was enforced without respect of persons. Being carried in a sedan, with four bearers and four coolies running alongside, I was horrified to perceive the head coolie incontinently knock down an

old mandarin who was in the way. The poor old gentleman rolled over and over, Red Button and all; and when he arose, his gorgeous silks all befouled with mud, the coolie spat in his face. China is full of the unexpected.

### HIGHLY COMMERCIAL

As already explained, the two aspects of my investigations, the military conditions and the commercial conditions, are here treated separately for the sake of simplicity, although at the time they were necessarily conducted together. The following brief account of the results of my inquiries into the state of trade and commerce contains those particulars which may still retain their interest.

From Pekin I went to Tientsin, where I attended a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, which vehemently protested against the "Sphere of Influence" policy, declaring that the future trade of Tientsin would be entirely dependent on preserving the integrity of China, and upon the existence of a guarantee of the policy of the "Open Door." The British section of the Chamber of Commerce presented to me a memorandum, which they desired me to transmit to the Associated Chambers of Commerce in England, protesting against the absence of any definite policy, and stating that considerable anxiety existed with regard to the safety of capital already invested in China. The fear of Russian aggression had virtually paralysed the movement of capital in the northern part of China. The general opinion was that if the "Open Door" policy were established and secured, these apprehensions would disappear.

I was most courteously received by the Chinese authorities at Tientsin, who expressed great friendliness towards Great Britain; and who, as usual, affirmed that China was helpless and that all the European countries were taking advantage of her weakness. In the case of Russia, they stated that concessions were being demanded throughout the whole country which China was unable to refuse.

From Tientsin I went to Tongshan, travelling upon the Shanhaikwan railway, which had been built by Scotch engineers under the direction of Mr. Kinder, a British subject of great talent and energy, who had married a Japanese lady. Of the two people whom I met who seemed to me really to possess an intimate knowledge of China and the Chinese, Mr. Kinder was one. The other was Dr. Morrison, *The Times* correspondent.

With Mr. Kinder's assistance, I collected the whole of the statistics regarding the working of the Tongshan railway workshops, of the Shanhaikwan railway, and of the coal mine, in which Chinese miners were employed under European foremen.

Upon my arrival at Newchang, I was received by the British residents. The British merchants here, like the others elsewhere, wished me to represent to the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain that trade in the North of China must be secured against foreign aggression, and transmitted to me a number of resolutions to this effect.

The Russians had settled at Newchang, taking the land without permission, and paying the native occupiers nominal prices. Since 1897 the Russians had been pouring troops into Manchuria, and their number was steadily increasing. I prepared a detailed report upon the trade of Newchang.

Chefoo I visited twice, first on 13th October and again on 9th November. The British merchants here complained of the extension of German interest, which began with the opening of Kiao Chao. I thought, however, that their alarm was not justified. Kiao Chao had been declared by Germany to be an open port.

Upon visiting Wei-hai-wei, I observed that with a comparatively small expenditure of money it could be made into a most efficient and powerful naval base. Already, in the few months which had elapsed since the British flag was hoisted on 24th May, 1898, Commander

E. F. A. Gaunt (now Commodore Gaunt, C.M.G.), in command of a party of bluejackets and Marines, had accomplished a most admirable piece of administrative work, in cleaning up the place and in enforcing law and order so tactfully and skilfully that the only punishments inflicted had consisted in docking the pigtails of two offenders. There were no guns mounted at Wei-hai-wei; but at Port Arthur, 80 miles distant northwards across Korea Bay, the Russians had already mounted seventy guns.

I also observed that the island of Wei-hai-wei, which is two-thirds the size of Gibraltar, was the best place on the China Station for the establishment of a sanatorium for the Fleet.

My visit to Kiao Chao was made in response to a cordial invitation sent to me by Rear-Admiral H.R.H. Prince Henry of Prussia. The harbour is a difficult place for vessels to make, particularly in foggy weather. The Germans were as busy as bees, clearing the ground, building barracks, making parade grounds and preparing emplacements for guns. Prince Henry was most kind to me, and showed to me everything. His administration and organisation were admirable; and afforded another example of the achievements of naval officers.

But the place was still under military rule, which discourages commerce. On my voyage out, three Germans had come on board at Singapore. They told me that, although they had been very happy under British rule, they preferred their own colony, and intended to start a hotel at Kiao Chao. Some time afterwards I met those three patriotic Germans again. They were on their way back to Singapore; because, so they said, they could not make a living at Kiao Chao. They told me that they were obliged to pay a tax of five per cent. upon their investment, with the prospect of paying another five per cent. when, after a period of years, their property should again be surveyed.

At Shanghai, which, being situated at the entrance of

the Yangtse Valley, is the most important Treaty Port in the Far East, I framed an elaborate report upon its trade. The China Association presented to me a memorandum containing the usual protest against the insecurity of British interests in China.

While I was at Shanghai I had three interviews with the Marquess Ito, lately Prime Minister of Japan. The Marquess, I believe, was unofficially employed in endeavouring to extend Japanese interests in China. He expressed the greatest friendliness towards Great Britain. During the political disturbances in Japan, the Marquess Ito had fled to England as a sailor before the mast in a British vessel. He told me that, landing at Gravesend very hungry, he went into a shop and bought a loaf, putting down half a sovereign. The shopman, presumably taking advantage of the fact that he was a Japanese, refused to give him the change. The Marquess told me that he was sadly shocked; for, until that moment, he had believed the English to be the most honest people in the world.

In Shanghai, I learned that one of the leaders of the Reform Party, Huang Chin, a victim of the *coup d'état*, had been arrested and was about to be sent to Nanking for execution. I urged his Excellency Kwei Chun, Viceroy of Szechuan, to use his influence to save Huang's life, pointing out to him that these political executions were exceedingly distasteful to the British people. I am glad to say that my intervention was effectual, in that Huang Chin, instead of being executed, was banished.

His Excellency Liu-Kwen-Yi having most courteously placed H.I.M.S. *Nanshin* at my disposal, I took passage in her to Nanking.

I was much interested in the arrangement and armament of the Chinese man-of-war; but as she was warmed by means of charcoal stoves, my investigations were conducted in a condition of partial suffocation from the fumes.

Upon arriving at Nanking in the *Nanshin*, I received a salute of fifteen guns; and proceeded to the Yamen of his

Excellency the Viceroy Liu-Kwen-Yi between the lines of troops and banner-bearers, numbering some thousands, who were ranged along the whole route of four and a half miles in my honour. Liu-Kwen-Yi, who received me with the greatest courtesy and kindness, said that he was anxious to show his friendship for Great Britain in every way. In the course of two long and interesting conversations with the Viceroy, who expressed his fear of the present unstable posture of affairs, I suggested that there were two contingencies to fear: a rebellion against the Government and an insurrection against foreigners; either of which would be fatal to commercial security. His Excellency, however, assured me that there was no danger of disturbances inspired by dislike of the foreigner. Herein he was mistaken; for within two years occurred the Boxer outbreak, which had the approval, secret or overt, of the Empress Dowager. At the Viceroy's request, I drew up a memorandum containing my scheme for the reorganisation of the army on the principle of the Imperial Maritime Customs, which I had proposed at Pekin. A translation of this document was sent by the Viceroy to Pekin.

On my return journey, I inspected the army, the fleet, the arsenal and the Imperial naval college.

I arrived at Hong Kong for the second time on Christmas Day, 1898. The views of the China Association and of the British merchants here were of the same tenor as those, already described, expressed by the British communities at all the trading centres visited by me.

To complete my itinerary in brief, other places visited by me were Wuhu, Kinkiang, Chinkiang, Kiangzin, Hankow, Foochow, Swatow, Amoy, Canton, and Wuchow. At each place I drew up a report describing the local conditions and embodying the representations of the British communities.

Their common complaint was that British trade was declining. But an examination of the detailed reports which, in response to the letters sent by me beforehand, were ready for my inspection, showed that on the contrary the branches

of trade already possessed by the British had increased; and that it was in new branches started by foreign nations that the British were not succeeding. Their comparative failure in this respect I held to be partly due to the fact that foreign nations supplied what the people wanted, while the British insisted on trying to sell to them what the British thought they ought to want.

### CONCLUSION

The following reports were framed by me: report on the railways and waterways; report upon the British Consulate; a general comprehensive report upon Trade, Treaties and Tariffs; and a highly elaborate report upon the complicated question of Finance and Currency. All these are set forth in my book, *The Break-up of China*, which also includes a summary of the reforms which appeared to me to be most requisite. These were:—

1. An Imperial coinage.
2. Reform in the method of collecting the land tax.
3. Removal of restrictions on the export of grain.
4. Modification of the laws governing the salt monopoly.
5. The right of foreigners to reside in the interior for purposes of trade.
6. The registration and protection of trade marks and copyright.
7. The removal of the remaining restrictions on inland water navigation.
8. The abolition of the *likin*, or a change of administration which would ensure that *likin* should be collected once only.
9. Greater facilities to be given to respectable foreign syndicates to work minerals.
10. The establishment of reformed departments for the regulation of finance, railways, waterways, roads, posts and telegraphs, and a bureau to deal with all questions connected with trade. The existing

telegraph service was so bad, that a letter sent from Tientsin to Shanghai has been known to arrive before a telegram sent at the same time. *The Times* correspondent at Pekin told me that his telegrams very often cost as much to send from Pekin to Shanghai as from Shanghai to London.

11. One other bureau was urgently needed, a Trade Intelligence Department, to deal with scientific and practical questions relating to the natural products available in China for commercial purposes. What is an insignificant export to-day may become a valuable article of commerce to-morrow. There should be a scientific classification of the products of China on the same lines as the classification of products in India.

I may here quote what, in relation to the whole matter, I wrote at the time:

"If it be said that my policy for the reorganisation of the Chinese army and police is a warlike policy, I reply that it is the only plan yet suggested which gives any guarantee of peace. Great Britain's strongest guarantee of peace has been the reorganisation of her Fleet. Without peace commerce must perish. To keep the peace, authority must be properly equipped. Our choice with regard to the Chinese Empire is simple: we may choose to wreck or we may choose to restore."

The resolutions passed by the British mercantile communities and the many letters I received from them subsequently, testify to their approval of my recommendations. The following documents express the sentiments of the Chinese themselves, and of the foreign merchants:

"At a meeting of Chinese merchants and traders, and other Chinese gentlemen resident in Hong Kong, held at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce on 22nd January, 1899, on

the motion of Mr. Ho Tung, seconded by Mr. Leung Shiu Kwong, it was resolved:

"'1. Having closely followed with great and attentive interest, and carefully considered what Lord Charles Beresford has said and done in China in connection with his recent mission on behalf of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, we, the Chinese community of Hong Kong here assembled, are in accord with and heartily support the policy the noble lord proposes in regard to the "Open Door" as regards commerce, and also with regard to the reorganisation of the Chinese army.

"'2. That we recognise the combined proposals, if carried out, will benefit China quite as much as, if not more, than England, and other nations, in her trading interest, and we therefore hope that Lord Charles will be intrusted by the British Government with the carrying out of the views he has so closely enunciated, as we, the Chinese people of Hong Kong, observe that his efforts are directed to the benefit of both his country and our country, and to the benefit of the trade of China and the trade of England.

"'3. That we recognise and make our cordial acknowledgments for the sympathetic manner with which he has approached our country; and

"'4. That we desire emphatically to express our full confidence in Lord Charles Beresford, whose ability, integrity and zeal we are sure peculiarly fit him successfully to carry out the proposals he has made for the furtherance of trade and the preservation of the Chinese Empire.'

"(Signed) LO CHI TIU, Chairman
H. O. FOOK, Secretary"

The General Foreign Commercial Community of Shanghai, on 8th January, 1899, passed the following resolution:

"That our cordial thanks be tendered to Lord Charles Beresford for the service he has rendered to the foreign communities in China by personal investigation into the conditions of the various interests we represent.'

Upon my return, I represented what I believed to be the real posture of affairs in China, when the subject was discussed in the House of Commons. In November, 1899, I read a paper upon "Engineering in China" before the Institute of Mechanical Engineers.

## CHAPTER XLV

## TRAFFICS AND DISCOVERIES (*Continued*)

### II. JAPAN

HAVING received invitations to visit Japan from the Chambers of Commerce and from prominent persons interested in the China trade, I stayed for a short time in that country on my way home. Thirty years previously, accompanying H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh in the *Galatea*, I had seen the Old Japan. I was now to see, super-imposed upon the Old, the New Japan. That which China was groping after, Japan had seized and made her own. What we call Western civilisation : the civilisation of commerce, of science, of mechanical invention : Japan had put on like a garment.

Both the army and the navy, whose supreme commander is the Emperor, were organised, efficient, and in process of augmentation. China feared Russia; but Japan was even then preparing to fight Russia.

As in arms, so in manufactures, Japan already rivalled the West. The foreigner, who, a generation previously, walked in peril of his life, was now welcomed, imitated, and loaded with civilities.

During my brief sojourn, the swift and shining manifestations of the new spirit (which was the old spirit seeking a new avatar) surrounded me. At Osaka, quick-firing field artillery and magazine rifles were being made to Japanese patents, excellent in design and construction; and the humming factories were turning out sugar, cotton, matches,

iron and steel; and, at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce, the Mayor declared that it was imperative in the interests of Japanese trade that the policy of the "Open Door" should prevail in China. The Chamber of Commerce said the same at Kioto. A generation since, the two-sworded *samurai* were guarding the door of Japan, lest it should be opened.

At Kioto, electricity, generated by water power, lighted the streets and houses, worked the trams, pumped the water; the use of electric power was then more common, I believe, in Japan than in any other country; and there were telegraphs and telephones in nearly every town.

In Tokio, I had the honour of meeting several members of the Ministry, who, stating that they regarded the "Spheres of Influence" policy to be fatal to Japanese interests, expressed their desire to work together with other nations in favour of the policy of the "Open Door." Having been invited by the Chamber of Commerce to address a public meeting, I spoke on the subject of the future development of trade with China. The meeting was attended by Ministers, military and naval officers, the President and many members of both Houses, and representatives of the mercantile community. The Japanese interpreter sat beside me, and equipped with inkpot, paper and brush, he painted down my words in the Japanese character. When I sat down, the interpreter rose and repeated my speech in Japanese, his delivery occupying the same time as mine. Every now and then he was interrupted by applause, the audience tapping with their fans. The British Minister told me that it was aroused by the mention of the identity of Japanese and British interests, and especially by the comparison drawn between Japan and Great Britain.

The authorities kindly conducted me over the various schools of military training, in which the system was perfect; the arsenal, employing 6000 men, and turning out work second to none; and the barracks, a model of efficiency. The Minister for War, General Viscount Katsura, courteously

held a parade of troops for my benefit. All arms were admirable alike in organisation, appearance, and discipline.

Before leaving Tokio, I had the opportunity of paying my respects to his Majesty the Emperor; who was so good as to say he remembered the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh of whose suite I had been a member, and invited me to an afternoon's sport in his private pleasaunce. Every foot of the garden was wrought like a gem. Diversified with miniature mountains, tiny grottoes, and brilliant foliage, it was intersected by narrow rivers which were haunted by wild duck. Two or three days before the sport took place, the garden was left solitary, so that the ducks should come into it. The method was to catch the duck in a hand-net as it rose from the water.

His Majesty said that the development of trade with China must strengthen the friendship between the peoples of Great Britain and Japan, the interests of both countries being the same; and expressed the hope that the endeavours of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain might be the beginning of a great extension of trade, in which Japan would take a prominent part.

At Yokohama, Admiral Yamamoto, Minister of Marine, courteously invited me to visit the dockyard and fleet at Yokohama, placing H.I.M. cruiser *Takasago* at my disposal. The vessel was throughout in as good condition as a man-of-war could be; and her ship's company were smart, well dressed and well disciplined.

At Yokosha is a large torpedo depot, at which everything connected with torpedo warfare is organised under its own administration; a system preferable to the British method, in which the torpedo departments are auxiliary to the dockyards.

The impression disengaged by my sojourn of a fortnight in Japan was that both the political and commercial classes were determined to enforce the "Open Door" in China, where their commercial interests were extensive. I observed that the nation was arming itself steadily and effectively; and that a spirit of patriotism was universal. Four years later, the Russo-Japanese war broke out.

## CHAPTER XLVI

## TRAFFICS AND DISCOVERIES (*Continued*)

### III. The United States

THE many invitations sent to me while I was in China from the United States determined me to visit that country on the way home; in order to explain to the American nation the situation in China; to encourage, if it might be, the growth of amity between the English and the American peoples; and incidentally to mark the contrast between the most ancient and static Empire of the East, and the restless dynamic forces of the latest experiment in Western civilisation. I had arrived at Nagasaki on the 11th January, 1899; traversed Japan as a half-way house, in which West and East had married, and in which their offspring were presently to astonish the world; and came to San Francisco on the 10th of February.

Immediately the wheels of life began to revolve with an extraordinary velocity. I was caught up in the sumptuous hospitality of that generous people—deluged with invitations; and haunted by interviewers. In looking back, great cities rise one upon another, like cities in a dream; I seem always to be speaking to a field of keen, upturned countenances; the only respite comes in the days and nights, all run into one to the long roll of the cars, as the train eats up the miles of that land of vast spaces; and everywhere there are welcome and cordiality and friendship.

And everywhere there were Irishmen, rushing to shake hands with a countryman; rushing any distance, often

hundreds of miles, just to exchange greetings at the latter end. Irishmen are so, the world over.

One among my countrymen had travelled a thousand miles to see me, when he called at my hotel. I told him that I had twenty minutes before starting for Chicago, and that I must retire to my room to bathe, shave and prepare a speech in that time.

"I'll come wid ye," said he, cheerfully; and while I made my dispositions, he sat in the adjoining room and talked of the old country with that pride and affection which all Irishmen feel for their native land.

San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, Buffalo, Washington, New York: these were the great towns strung among the lesser. At San Francisco, I addressed the Chamber of Commerce. At Chicago, I was entertained by Mr. McCormick, President of the Associated Chambers and of the Committee of the Commercial Club.

All unknown to me, it had been arranged that I should address a large meeting at eleven o'clock on the morning of my arrival. When the train came in at ten o'clock, I was informed of the arrangement; went to the hotel, dictated notes to my secretary while I made my toilette, arrived at the meeting punctually, and spoke for half an hour.

Here, and throughout America, I kept strictly to my terms of reference: dwelling upon the opportunities for extending trade in China; the necessity for pursuing the policy of the "Open Door"; and the community of interest existing between America and Great Britain.

The Board of Trade, which is the Stock Exchange of Chicago, invited me to visit them; and when I was introduced as the representative of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain, the whole business of the great market was stopped in order that I might address the members; an event which, I was informed, was without precedent. The Commercial Club having kindly invited me to be the guest of their periodical banquet, the Committee most courteously altered the date in order to suit my

convenience. In this case, there was a precedent; for the date of the occasion had been altered when General Grant had been a guest of the Club.

At Washington, I was most hospitably entertained by Mr. Hay, Secretary of State and late Ambassador in Great Britain. I had the privilege of paying my respects to President McKinley, and of meeting many distinguished Americans, Senators and others, all of whom expressed great interest in the enterprise of the British Associated Chambers of Commerce. At this time I first met Colonel Robert M. Thompson, who became a great friend of mine; and Admiral Brownson, whose skill in handling a fleet I subsequently admired.

Upon my arrival at New York, I fulfilled an engagement to address the American Asiatic Association. Mr. Whitelaw Reid, afterwards Ambassador in Great Britain, in an eloquent speech, declared that the policy of the "Open Door" was that which was best suited for the development of American trade, and that the American Government intended to institute it in the Philippine Islands.

Addressing the New York Chamber of Commerce, I found the members to express the same sympathy and interest with which my representations had been received throughout the United States. The American attitude was, in fact, that while they were desirous of strengthening their friendship with England, and approved the policy of the "Open Door," they did not feel justified in going beyond a moral support of it.

Upon visiting New York a second time, I was introduced into the Stock Exchange by Mr. Rudolph Kepler, the President, who took me up the floor to the rostrum. The proceedings were stopped; and at the President's request, I addressed the members for two or three minutes. Some one said that my speech was at the rate of 100,000 dollars a second. I hope he was exaggerating.

## CHAPTER XLVII

### H.M.S. *RAMILLIES*

WHEN the men who had gone out to South Africa to take part in the Jameson Raid were passing through the Suez Canal on their way back again, I saw and heard the people in the British ships cheering them as they went by; a popular effusion which (in my view) boded trouble in the future. Soon after my return from the United States in 1899, an instalment of the trouble arrived. The burghers of the Transvaal and of the Orange Free State crossed the British frontiers on the 12th October.

This country began as usual by underrating the strength of the enemy. Many of us remember the talk about rolling them up, and all the rest of it; all very bright in its way; but not the way to begin a war, much less to end it. Those of us who understood war, were by no means so confident; and I expressed their opinion, when, as I may perhaps here venture to recall, speaking at the Cutlers' Feast at Sheffield on the 2nd November, and again at Sunderland on the 6th November, 1899, I most emphatically advocated the dispatch of a much larger force than the Government had allocated for the purpose; on the principle that "in the fire brigade, if an officer thought a fire needed four engines to put it out, he would send eight."

Matters have changed so little since the South African war, that, although our Army and Navy are relatively inferior to what they were in 1899, the politicians are still alternately boasting of what will be done in an emergency, and declaring that war is no longer possible.

In December, 1899, I was appointed second in command of the Mediterranean Fleet under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir J. A. Fisher, K.C.B. (now Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O.), flying his flag in H.M.S. *Renown*, and thereupon resigned my seat at York. The London Chamber of Commerce were so good as to invite me to a banquet prior to my departure. Speaking upon that occasion, I pointed out that under our existing system of administration, while the Cabinet must always bear the ultimate responsibility, there was not yet in existence a department whose duty it was to represent what were the requirements, present and future, of Imperial defence. So far as the Navy was concerned, the duty was charged upon the First Sea Lord; but it involved a task so vast and complex, that no one man could possibly fulfil it; nor had the Intelligence Department been developed, according to its original purpose, into a War Staff.

In the event of a disaster in war, resulting from lack of organisation and preparation, the Government, being rightly held responsible, are perhaps turned out of office; when the nation may derive what consolation may accrue from losing both its Government and the Empire upon the same day.

My first command as rear-admiral coincided with the final disappearance from the Navy of the old masts and sails training which was the delight and pride of the sailors of my generation. Before the decision of the Admiralty had been finally made, I suggested (in *The Times*, 9th December, 1899) that, as there were then only four training ships, so that no more than a proportion of boys could be passed through them, either the system should be abolished, or two squadrons of six ships should be provided, and all boys trained in them The Admiralty, however, considered that it would be inadvisable to send away so many young seamen; and they were right.

I hoisted my flag in H.M.S. *Ramillies* on 12th January, 1900. She was a first-class battleship of the *Royal Sovereign*

class, of 14,150 tons. At that time she was six or seven years old; at the time of writing, although she is no more than twenty, she has been sold for old iron; and when they took her away to break her up, she got adrift in a seaway off the Isle of Wight.

I saw the last of my old flagship as I was passing through the gut of Gibraltar, on board the R.M.S. *Orvieto*, on 25th November, 1913. She was being towed by a small tug to her last home, the yard of an Italian ship-knacker. I thought of the old happy days on board her, and all the sport, when she held the record in the Fleet for most of the drills and all the boat-racing.

The flag-captain was Robert S. Lowry (now Vice-Admiral Sir R. S. Lowry, K.C.B.), who had been with me in the *Undaunted* as commander. The commander was the Hon. Horace L. A. Hood (now Rear-Admiral Hood, C.B., M.V.O., D.S.O.). The flag-lieutenant was Maurice J. G. Cay, and the secretary, Paymaster John A. Keys (now Fleet Paymaster J. A. Keys), who was with me afterwards in my flagships.

At that time, apart from being charged with the duty of carrying into execution the orders of the commander-in-chief, an officer second in command had no individual responsibility. In other words, he had little opportunity of acquiring from his superior officer that knowledge which, in the event of war, he would require in an emergency.

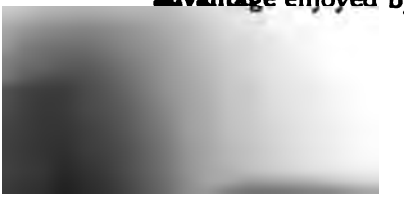
Upon the adequacy of the Mediterranean Fleet depends the safety of the Empire in time of war; but although war was then waging in South Africa, although the other European Powers regarded Great Britain with open or covert hostility, and although a combination of France and Russia against this country was by no means improbable, the Mediterranean Fleet was barely sufficient to meet the French Fleet alone with any reasonable certainty of success. In other words, so far as numbers and composition were concerned, the Mediterranean Fleet was incapable of carrying into execution the duties with which it must be charged in

the event of war. Under the command of Sir John Fisher, its efficiency was admirable.

The bare statement of the requirements sufficiently indicates their necessity. An increase of the supply of reserve coal, then dangerously deficient; the provision of fleet colliers, fully equipped, of distilling ships, of telegraph ships, and of hospital ships, of which until quite recently there was only one in the Navy, and that one a present from the United States; of store ships, reserve ammunition ships and parent ships for torpedo craft: thirty-four vessels in all, representing those auxiliaries without which no Fleet is adequately fitted to fulfil its duties in war. These deficiencies fall to be recorded, because, although some of them have since been supplied, it is still the habit of the authorities to neglect the provision of fleet auxiliaries, and the public are taught to believe that a squadron of battleships is self-sufficient.

The construction of submarines, which had long been the subject of experiment in France, having been begun by the United States, induced me to write to Lord Goschen, First Lord, observing that whether or not the new arm might prove valuable in war, at least it ought to be tested, and suggesting that two experimental boats should be ordered. The Admiralty shortly afterwards purchased five submarines of the Holland Torpedo Boat Company, U.S.A., of a similar design to the six Hollands of the *Adder* class ordered by the United States in June, 1900. The Hollands were followed by the construction in this country of the "A" class; and, as everyone knows, the type was rapidly developed until Great Britain now possesses a large fleet of these vessels.

Having investigated when I was in the *Undaunted* the French system of nucleus crews, under which the older men and pensioners were employed to form skeleton crews for the ships in Reserve, upon the understanding that they were not to go to sea in full commission except in the event of war, I sent home a report upon the subject, indicating the advantage enjoyed by the French naval seaman, who, under



the nucleus crew system, could look forward with certainty to spending the end of his career comfortably in a home port, and suggesting that a modification of the system might be introduced into our own Service. Under the British system, the ships in the Steam Reserve were then kept in order by working parties composed of men temporarily under training in the depots attached to the dockyards, an arrangement which had the disadvantage that the men who formed the crews in the event of war, would not be the men who were familiar with the ships.

Some years later, the Admiralty introduced the nucleus crew system, which differed entirely from the principle upon which was based the French method, in that a proportion of active service ratings were placed on board the ships of the Reserve, and that these crews were being constantly shifted from ship to ship. After a series of experiments, it was officially decided to man a number of ships in active commission with nucleus crews, which are officially stated to be as efficient as full crews; a state of things which is as dangerous to the national security as it is unfair to officers and men.

The accident occurring on board the French man-of-war *Admiral Duperré*, leading to the conclusion that if cordite were exposed to heat above a certain temperature its ignition would cause an enormously increased pressure upon the gun, induced me officially to represent the necessity of keeping ammunition at an even temperature. Several years afterwards, a large quantity of cordite distributed among the Fleet was found to be in so dangerous a condition that it was destroyed, and the ammunition chambers were equipped with cooling apparatus.

My interest in signalling inspired me to invent a new drill for the signalmen, in which the men themselves represented ships. Linked together with a tack-line, in order to keep them in station, the men executed the evolutions of a fleet in obedience to signals. I also advocated that all captains and commanders should pass the signal school as

a qualification for flag-command. Every admiral ought to be familiar with manœuvre signals at least; for in default of that knowledge, he does not know that a wrong signal has been hoisted in his flagship until he sees the ships making a wrong manœuvre. An admiral who understands signals will seldom, if ever, be observed hoisting a negative.

It was in the year 1900 that H.M.S. *Terrible*, commanded by Captain Percy M. Scott (now Admiral Sir P. M. Scott, K.C.B., K.C.V.O.) on the China station, distinguished herself by making a gunnery record of a percentage of 76·92 hits, as compared with the mean percentage of all ships in commission, of which the highest was 46·91 (10-inch gun), and the lowest was 28·2 (16·25 inch and 13·5 inch). Comparing the *Renown*, flagship of the Mediterranean, with the *Terrible*, both really smart ships, it was clear that there must be something radically wrong with our gunnery training, when the *Terrible* made more than twice the number of hits with her 6-inch guns in the same number of rounds.

I wrote home, suggesting that, as Captain Percy Scott had solved the difficulties with which we were all struggling, it would be advisable to send him to the various Fleets and Squadrons to teach us the right methods. I also wrote to Captain Percy Scott, expressing my interest in his achievement, and received from him a courteous reply, enclosing much useful information: which enabled me to represent to the commander-in-chief that consideration should be given to the new arrangements for shooting instituted on the China station, owing to the inventions and the industry of Captain Percy Scott. It was also urged that a gunnery training ship should be attached to each Fleet.

Among the excellent practices introduced by the commander-in-chief, was the writing of essays by officers upon a given subject—the interchange of ideas being of much educational value; and perhaps of hardly less utility, was the exercise in composition. Many naval officers evince marked literary ability; but there is always a proportion who find accurate expression a difficulty. Few, however, so

dismally succumb to it as the author of the following signal, made in response to a request from an admiral for the explanation of a mistake in manœuvring. The reply was:

"When signal A2 pendant was made —— reduced to 30 revolutions and as she gradually dropped astern to get astern of —— observed her bearing she suddenly seemed to stop and turn towards us and we stopped and went astern on seeing flagship passing ahead of —— altogether we had turned 6 points by that time. My object was to get under her stern by dropping and watching her thinking that she was dropping gradually to get astern."

At this time, the Board of Admiralty effected many improvements. The coal supply for the Mediterranean was increased, the Mediterranean Fleet was strengthened, and provided with colliers and with a hospital ship; better ships were allocated for gunnery training at the home ports; the old coastguard ships were replaced with modern vessels; submarines were added to the Fleet; the signalling was improved; the regulations for training gunnery and torpedo ratings were revised; obsolete ships were removed from the effective list; a naval tactical school was established; and combined manœuvres of the Channel and Mediterranean Fleets were instituted.

While Vice-Admiral Sir John Fisher was commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, he greatly improved its fighting efficiency. As the result of his representations, the stocks of coal at Malta and Gibraltar were increased, the torpedo flotillas were strengthened, and the new breakwaters at Malta were begun. Some of Sir John Fisher's reforms are confidential; but among his achievements which became common knowledge, the following are notable: From a 12-knot Fleet with breakdowns, he made a 15-knot Fleet without breakdowns; introduced long range target practice, and instituted the Challenge Cup for heavy gun shooting; instituted various war practices for officers and men; invited, with excellent results, officers to formulate their opinions upon cruising and battle formation; drew up complete

instructions for torpedo flotillas; exercised cruisers in towing destroyers and battleships in towing one another, thereby proving the utility of the device for saving coal in an emergency; and generally carried into execution Fleet exercises based, not on tradition but, on the probabilities of war.

The *Ramillies* competing in rifle-shooting, hockey, pistol shooting and the squadron athletic sports, took the Mediterranean Jewel and £1; was first in the sweepstakes; tied first for the Pembroke Plate; won the tug-of-war twice, and the greasy pig race twice; altogether, the ship took six firsts, nine seconds, and five thirds, out of 19 events.

In the early days of motor-cars, a motor-car race between Captain George Neville and myself was arranged, the course being from the bottom to the top of the Rock of Gibraltar. My car broke down, and Neville won the race. Another breakdown in the same car occurred 20 miles distant from Vigo. That night I was giving a dinner in Vigo to the Municipality and all the notabilities. I had not recovered from a bad fall I had had with the Pytchley a few weeks previously, when I broke my pelvis. I was riding a first-class hireling hunter; a bullfinch had been cut, and the hedging was in the field towards us; my horse took off at the end of the hedging in the field, and (as they say in Ireland) threw a magnificent lep, but failed to clear the top of the wattles, and came over on top of me.

So, when the car broke down, I could not walk. There was no help near. The two friends who accompanied me, Hedworth Lambton and Hwfa Williams, volunteered to get assistance. Finding none, they had to walk twenty-one miles into Vigo. Hwfa Williams was wearing pumps. For several days previously, distrusting the car, he had equipped himself with stout boots in case of accident; now, of course, he had left them in the ship. When he had first arrived on board, he had declared that he was so ill that he could not be long for this world; but the walk into Vigo cheered him up wonderfully.

I was eventually towed in the car into Vigo, arriving about two o'clock in the morning. In the meantime, the Staff had entertained my guests.

When I had been some six months in the Mediterranean, I was approached as to whether I would accept the command of the Australian squadron. Considering that the appointment would not afford the opportunities I desired of learning how to handle a fleet, I intimated my preference for remaining in the Mediterranean; where I remained for my full time accordingly.

On 5th February, 1902, a few days before I completed my fifty-sixth year, I hauled down my flag; and, in pursuance of a stately old custom often practised on such an occasion, I was rowed ashore by twelve officers in the cutter. Landing at Naples, I went home, arriving in London just in time to attend the debate upon the Navy Estimates in the House of Commons.

In the following June, Admiral Sir John Fisher succeeded Vice-Admiral Sir A. L. Douglas upon the Board of Admiralty as Second Sea Lord.

## CHAPTER XLVIII

## HER MAJESTY'S MIDSHIPMEN

HAVING adopted the practice of asking the officers in the Fleet under my command to write essays upon subjects connected with the Service, I once received a disquisition in which the author (a midshipman) dwelt sorrowfully upon the unaccountable indifference manifested by senior officers towards the opinions of midshipmen, who, said the writer, having young and vigorous minds, were naturally better fitted to grapple with problems which baffled the older and slower intellect.

This particular young gentleman must I think have applied his vigorous mind to the problem of how to obtain a generous allowance of leave. I trust I did him no injustice; but whenever the Fleet lay off the coasts of Scotland, he was afflicted with a grievous toothache, requiring an immediate visit to the dentist. When he had gone ashore to have a tooth out in every port in Scotland, I sent for him.

"Tell me," I said, "how many teeth you have left? For I make out that you have had forty-six teeth extracted in Scotland alone."

Many a delightful day have I had with the midshipmen of the ships and fleets in which I have served. We fished together, rode, shot, hunted and raced together. Memory does not always supply episodes in their chronological order; and I set these down as they occur to me.

When I was lieutenant in the *Bellerophon*, stationed at Bermuda, I used to take the midshipmen out fishing. In

those seas, the water is so clear that one can watch the fish taking the bait. Once, deep down, I saw the head of a conger eel protruding from the cleft of the rocks in which he lay. I dropped the bait in front of his nose, and watched his head move back and forth, until he took the bait. Then I shifted the midshipmen to the farther side of the boat to counterweigh the strain and to get a purchase on the line, and hauled out the great eel, piece by piece, and we dragged him into the boat.

About that time, the midshipmen saved me from a highly disagreeable death. We were out fishing in my boat, and one of the midshipmen threw my housewife for snooded hooks at another, and missing him, it went overboard. Now my fishing housewife was a most valuable possession; I had made it myself; and when I saw it sinking slowly down through the clear water, I dived for it and caught it. By the time I rose to the surface, the boat had drifted away from me. Hailing the crew, I swam after the boat; and as I reached her, I was suddenly hoisted bodily inboard by the slack of my breeches. Almost at the same moment, the fin of a shark shot up beside the gunwale. The midshipmen, my saviours, observed that "it was a sell for the shark."

We sailed one day to North Rock, which lies about twenty-two miles from Bermuda, and there we fished. Towards evening, it came on to blow. The ship was invisible from North Rock, and it was impossible to return. We tried to secure the boat to the rocks, but failed. There was nothing to be done but to lay to and bale. As the dark fell, I found we had no light. By this time the midshipmen were utterly exhausted, and were lying helpless. I made a lantern out of the mustard-pot, using oil from a sardine tin, and fabricating a wick from a cotton fishing line, and slung it on the beam. It burned all night. And all night, one of the worst nights in my recollection, we tacked to and fro close-reefed. At dawn, we started on the return trip; and, so whimsical a thing is destiny, no sooner had we

sighted the Fleet, than a puff of wind carried away the mast which had stood so stoutly all the night of storm.

My boat was what was called a "Mugian" boat, built in Bermuda. Her crew consisted of one man. His name was Esau, and he was a liberated slave of an incomparable obstinacy, a fault of which I cured him in one moment. When we took the boat for her first trip, I was persuaded that I could steer her among the reefs as well as Esau. But Esau was of another opinion. When argument failed, he tried to wrest the tiller from me, whereupon, unshipping it, I brought it down on Esau's head. I was a powerful youth, and I struck hard; yet it was not the head of Esau which was broken, but the tiller, though it was of oak. In trying to steer with a short piece of the tiller, we were nearly wrecked; but Esau ventured no further remonstrance, neither then nor afterwards.

There is a right way and there is a wrong way of dealing with midshipmen; and a little imagination may reveal the right way. When I was in command of the *Undaunted*, stationed at Malta, I noticed that the midshipmen, returning on board after taking violent exercise on shore, were often overheated, with the result that they caught a chill, and the chill brought on Malta fever, the curse of that island in those days. I issued an order that overcoats were to be taken ashore and worn while coming off to the ship; and I caused a room in the Custom House to be fitted with pegs, upon which the coats might be left until they were required.

The next thing was that a boy who came on board without his overcoat, had his leave stopped by the commander. There was a boxing match on shore, which I wished all the midshipmen to see. I intended that he should see the match; and it was also necessary that, without severity on the one hand or indulgence on the other, the occasion should be stamped upon his memory. So when the rest of the midshipmen had gone, I sent for the solitary youth, and bade him explain his case. When he had finished, I told

him that I intended to inflict upon him an additional punishment. He regarded me with a face of alarm.

"You will go ashore," I said, "and you will write for me a full and an exact account of the boxing match."

He saw the match; and after the pains of literary composition, he would not so easily forget his overcoat.

In the *Undaunted*, the midshipmen were taught to make their own canvas jumpers and trousers.

I used to keep two or three extra guns for the use of the midshipmen, whom I took out shooting whenever an opportunity occurred. Some of the boys had never handled a gun before. A midshipman once shot a hare when the animal was right at my feet.

"Wasn't that a good shot, sir!" said he joyously.

It did not occur to his innocence that he might have brought me down instead of the hare.

On Saturdays, I took out shooting the torpedo classes of midshipmen, which were conducted by my old friend, Captain Durnford (now Admiral Sir John Durnford, K.C.B., D.S.O.). We advanced in very open order, placing the midshipmen some 200 yards apart from one another, for fear of accidents, and we fired at everything that came along, in every direction. Upon one such occasion, I took out the warrant officers, among whom was the carpenter, who had never shot anything in his life. We were after snipe—I think at Platea—a bird whose flight, as all sportsmen know, is peculiar. A snipe in mid-flight will dive suddenly, dropping to earth out of sight. The old carpenter raised his gun very slowly, and aimed with immense deliberation, the muzzle of his gun cautiously tracing the flight of the bird, thus expending cartridge after cartridge. Suddenly his bird dropped. He shouted with delight and, holding his gun high over his head, ran as hard as he could pelt towards the spot upon which, as he believed, the bird had fallen dead. We saw it rise behind him; but nothing would persuade him that he had not slain his quarry. He searched and searched, in vain. Going back in the boat, I noticed that

he was sunk in a profound melancholy, and bade him cheer up.

"It do seem 'ard, sir," he said sadly, "that the only bird I ever shot in my life, I shouldn't be able to find it." And sad he remained.

After one of these excursions, a midshipman brought to me the gun I had lent to him, with the barrels bent.

"I am very sorry, sir," he said. "The fact is, I slipped on the rocks, and fell with the barrels under me. But," he added eagerly, "it shoots just as well as it did before, sir."

I turned to another midshipman who had been of the party.

"Did you see him shoot before the accident?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did he hit anything?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see him shoot *after* the accident?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did he hit anything?"

"No, sir."

"Then," I said to the first midshipman, "your statement is correct. Will you please take the gun to the armourer to be repaired?"

I landed at Gibraltar very early in the morning, about four o'clock, with the intention of cub-hunting. At the stables I found a midshipman, dressed in plain clothes, whom I did not know. I asked him what he was doing. He said that he wanted to go cub-hunting, but that he hadn't a horse. I gave him a mount and told him to stick to me. He did as he was told, literally. He was in my pocket all day; he jumped upon the top of me; I couldn't get rid of him. When I remonstrated, he said:

"You *told* me to stick to you, sir. And I say, sir, *isn't it fun*!"

He reminds me of the first time Fred Archer, the famous jockey, went out hunting. He stuck as close

behind his host as my midshipman did to me; but his reply to all remonstrance was:

"What are you grumbling at? I'm giving you half a length!"

Part of my scheme of training midshipmen in the Mediterranean was to send them away, under the charge of a lieutenant, for two days at a time, to fend for themselves upon one of the islands. I sent them away in the pinnace, and they took guns and provided their own food, and enjoyed themselves to the full.

At Alexandria, the midshipmen of a United States warship challenged the midshipmen in the Fleet to a pulling race. At that time I had a private galley, the *Hippocampe*, which had never been beaten; while the Americans had a boat of special construction, much lighter than our Service boats. As the *Hippocampe* was not a regulation Service boat, I asked the American captain whether he had any objection to her. He said he had none. I trained a crew selected from the midshipmen of the Fleet. The American midshipmen were of course older and heavier than our boys, as they enter the Navy at a later age. At one point in the race they were ten lengths ahead; but at the end they were astern.

While I was in command of the *Undaunted*, two of the midshipmen of the Fleet performed the feat of climbing the Great Pyramid on the wrong side, where the stone is rotten. It was a most perilous proceeding; and as I was responsible for the party, when the boys, having nearly reached the top, crawled round to the safe side, I was greatly relieved, and so was the Sheikh, who was imploring me on his knees to stop them. The fact was that the midshipmen had refused to take the Arab guides, and had started before I knew what was happening.

I used to take the midshipmen out for paperchases at Malta. The flag-lieutenant and myself, being mounted, were the hares. Crowds used to watch us, and we finished up with a big tea. Races on horseback for the midshipmen

were held at St. Paul's Bay, myself being the winning-post, at which they arrived hot and panting. There were only two accidents on record, a broken arm and a broken leg.

We ascended Vesuvius together, taking a heliograph, with which we signalled to the flagship, lying below in the Bay of Naples. Upon the very day the last great eruption began, we looked down the crater and saw the lava heaving and bubbling like boiling coffee in a glass receiver, and smoke bursting from it. The guides hurried us away and down; and no sooner had we arrived at the station, than there sounded the first explosion, which blew up the spot upon which we had been standing.

Seldom have I been more anxious than upon the day I stood on the roof of the Palace at Malta, and watched a crew of midshipmen struggling to make the harbour in a whole gale of wind. I had sent them in the launch to Gozo, and they had taken my bull-dog with them to give him some exercise. While they were on shore, the gale blew up; and rather than break their leave, the boys set sail. To my intense relief, I saw them make the harbour; and then, as they hauled the sheet aft to round-to, over went the boat, and they were all swimming about in the harbour; but happily they all came safely to land, including my bull-dog.

There was once a midshipman (an Irishman) who, perceiving treacle exposed for sale upon the cart of an itinerant vender of miscellaneous commodities, was suddenly inspired (I do not know why) with a desire to buy that condiment.

"What should the like of you be wanting with treacle?" said the man, who was a surly fellow.

"Why shouldn't I buy treacle?" said the boy.

"How much do you want?"

"As much as you've got."

"I've got nothing to put it in," grumbled the man.

"Put it in my hat," insisted the midshipman, proffering that receptacle. It was a tall hat, for he was in mufti.

The vender of treacle reluctantly filled the hat with treacle.

"What are you going to do with it?" he asked again.

"I'll show you," returned the midshipman; and he swiftly clapped the hat over the other's head, and jammed it down.

## CHAPTER XLIX

## THE PARLIAMENTARY ANVIL

SHORTLY after the expiration of my appointment as second in command in the Mediterranean, I was back again in the House of Commons, this time as member for Woolwich, having been returned unopposed. Many improvements in the Navy had been accomplished under Lord Salisbury's administration; but the central defect in the system remained; and the name of it was the want of a War Staff. There was no one in existence whose duty it was to discover and to represent what were the present and the future requirements of Imperial defence. The purpose with which the Intelligence Department had been constituted at the Admiralty, that it should be developed into a War Staff, had not been fulfilled. The First Sea Lord was indeed charged with the duties of organisation for war and the preparation of plans of campaign; but no one man could by any possibility accomplish so vast and so complex a task. How, then, was it done? The answer is that it was not done. The extraordinary achievement of the late Sir Frederick Richards may of course be cited to exemplify what one man can do; but Sir Frederick was the man of a century, alike in knowledge, ability and character; and that he was enabled, as First Sea Lord, temporarily to conquer the difficulties inherent in the system, merely proves that the system was so bad that a man of genius was required to overcome its defects, and (in a word) to achieve his purpose in spite of it. The supply of such men is extremely

limited. When such an one appears, which (with luck) is once or twice in a generation, the system may be disregarded, for he will make his own system.

But the need of a War Staff is sufficiently proved by the fact that, ever since it was established in 1912, its members have been working day and night. Two flag officers, four captains, five commanders, one lieutenant; three majors, Royal Marines, six captains, Royal Marines; one engineer-commander, three paymasters, and a staff of clerks: 25 officers and 19 civilians; now (1913) constitute the three divisions of the Admiralty War Staff; more than double the number composing the Intelligence Department when in 1912 it became one of the Divisions of the War Staff. The balance of officers and clerks was added to the Admiralty to discharge new duties. Who performed these duties before the addition was made? No one. What was the result? The Government were ignorant of all save obvious requirements, and often of those; and in the result, occurred periodical revelations of deficiencies (sometimes called panics), involving that excessive expenditure which is the price of neglect.

I have wrought hard to reform the system all my life. My successive sojourns in Parliament have been chiefly dedicated to that enterprise. So in 1902 I began again to hammer on the Parliamentary anvil. In March, I addressed the London Chamber of Commerce upon the lack of administrative efficiency in national organisation for defence. In June, I moved the reduction of the First Lord's salary in order to call attention to defects in Admiralty administration. It was pointed out that the time of commanders-in-chief upon most naval stations was habitually expended in representing to the Admiralty deficiencies which would never have occurred were there a Department at the Admiralty charged with the duty of providing against them; and that, in the lack of such a War Staff, the Budget for naval purposes was based upon financial and political considerations, leaving naval requirements out of the reckoning.

Mr. H. O. Arnold-Forster, Parliamentary Secretary to

the Admiralty, admitted that "there was need for reinforcement in the intellectual equipment which directed or ought to direct the enormous forces of the Empire." That was one way of putting it; he was perfectly right in affirming that (in similar language) a thinking department was required in which the best sailors and soldiers should combine to formulate the requirements of Imperial defence for the information of the Cabinet.

The Government would then (at least) know what the requirements were. In default of that knowledge, Ministers were open to the reproach expressed bluntly enough by *The Saturday Review* at the time (28th June, 1902):

"That the one essential qualification for commanding a great service such as our Navy should be an utter and entire ignorance of it and of everything belonging to it, so that this commander may approach the consideration of all questions relating to its well-being with absolute impartiality and perfect freedom from prejudice, is surely one of the most monstrous propositions ever put before men who were not candidates for Government departments at Yarmouth" (lunatic asylum).

In the following month (July) I asked Mr. Balfour (who succeeded Lord Salisbury as Prime Minister) in Parliament a question based upon Mr. Arnold-Forster's statement aforesaid, as it was the considered admission of a member of the Government. The question was: "Whether the attention of the Government had been given to the need for some reinforcement of the intellectual equipment for directing the forces of the Empire and for better preparation in advance with regard to the defence of the Empire."

Mr. Balfour replied that he would be delighted to increase in any way the intellectual equipment in connection with this or any other subject. Upon being further asked what steps he proposed to take, Mr. Balfour merely added that he would be glad to avail himself of such talent as may be available.

The Press thereupon accused the Prime Minister of

frivolity. In December (1902), however, Mr. Balfour, in reply to another question asked by me in the House, said that the "whole subject is at this moment engaging the very earnest attention of the Government." There was already in existence a Committee of Defence constituted by Lord Salisbury, as described in a previous chapter, but apparently it had only met on one occasion, nor could anyone discover that it had ever done anything. In 1902, nearly twelve years had elapsed since the Hartington Commission had recommended the "formation of a Naval and Military Council, which should probably be presided over by the Prime Minister, and consist of the Parliamentary Heads of the two Services, and their principal professional advisers. . . . It would be essential to the usefulness of such a Council and to the interests of the country that the proceedings and decisions should be duly recorded, instances having occurred in which Cabinet decisions have been differently understood by the two departments and have become practically a dead letter."

It may be hoped, indeed, that records are kept of the meetings of the Committee of Imperial Defence. They should contain some singularly interesting information when the time comes for their publication, which will be when the nation insists, as it does insist now and then, upon finding a scapegoat.

To Mr. Balfour belongs the credit of having constituted the Committee of Imperial Defence. After the experiences of the South African war it could scarcely be argued that some such body was not needed. Here, then, was a ripe opportunity, not only for co-ordinating the administration of the two Services, not only for rightly estimating the requirements of Imperial defence, but for lifting the Services above party politics. That opportunity was lost. The Committee of Imperial Defence immediately became, what it has remained, a sub-committee of the Cabinet, wholly in subjection to party politics.

But in 1903, another and a highly important step was

taken towards organisation for war, in the formation of the Commercial Branch of the Intelligence Department at the Admiralty, charged with the duty of dealing with the relations of the Navy and the mercantile marine in time of war and with the protection of commerce and food supply.

A few years later, the Department was abolished during a period of confusion; but it was restored as part of the War Staff soon after the constitution of that body.

It will be observed that the utility of the Committee of Imperial Defence depended primarily upon the work of a War Staff; for its naval and military members could only be placed in possession of the information with regard to requirements which it was (theoretically) their duty to impart to the political members, by means of a War Staff. But for several years after the formation of the committee, there was no War Staff in existence at the Admiralty.

In December, 1902, occurred an opportunity for introducing physical and military instruction into the elementary schools. The Education Bill was then before Parliament; in the elementary school system, the machinery required to provide physical and military training already existed: and in my view, it should be utilised, "in order that our manhood should have had some previous training if called upon to fight in defence of the Empire." With regard to physical education, its necessity was exemplified in the large number of recruits rejected for disabilities during the South African war; and as to military instruction, the proposal was based upon the necessity of teaching discipline and the rudiments of manly accomplishments to the young, by means of education in marching, giving orders, swimming, and shooting with a small-bore rifle. These considerations were placed by me before the Duke of Devonshire, who had charge of the Education Bill in the House of Lords, at the same time asking him to exert his influence to obtain the insertion of a clause embodying the proposals.

The Duke replied that Lord Londonderry, who was then Minister of Education, was considering how far it was

possible for the Board of Education to effect the objects desired. But he added the surprising information that "a considerable portion" of my suggestions "referred to matters which can only be dealt with by the War Office."

In the House of Commons, I moved that "physical and military instruction shall be compulsory in all schools supported by public funds." Then it was stated that the question of physical education could not be debated with reference to the Bill, but that there would be no objection to such a clause being inserted in the Education Code.

When I proposed accordingly that such a clause should be inserted in the Code of Education, Lord Londonderry said that he agreed with the Duke of Devonshire that such suggestions could only be dealt with by the War Office. I had no idea then, nor have I any conception now, what that cryptic statement meant. I pointed out at the time that it was wholly incomprehensible, the War Office having nothing whatever to do with elementary schools, but to no avail. The proposal was largely supported in the Press, but without effect upon the Government. The War Office phantom, which was about as relevant to the discussion as the ghost of Cæsar, proved irresistible. Nothing was done; except that the Government laid another brick in their favourite pathway of lost opportunities.

The use of oil fuel in battleships began in February, 1903; when the *Mars* and *Hannibal* went to sea, each fitted to burn oil in two boilers out of eight. One ship emitted white smoke, the other yellow; and both gave forth a smell so dreadful that, when I was in command of the Fleet, I told the captains of those vessels that I should place them to windward of the enemy as the two most formidable ships available. Nothing is better than oil fuel, on one condition—that you have got it.

The necessity of promoting officers to flag rank earlier, in order that they might gain the requisite experience while still young, was again urged by me, and to this end I advocated an increase of the rear-admirals' list. An

improvement has since been made in this respect. In 1902 there were 39 rear-admirals; in 1913, the number had been increased to 55.

Early in 1903, I visited America (for the third time), being most hospitably entertained by my old friend, Colonel Robert M. Thompson. During my stay with Colonel Thompson, who has been connected with the United States Navy, I saw much of the American Fleet, and had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with many American naval officers. Admiral Brownson I knew already; I had met Admiral Bob Evans in the Mediterranean when he was a commander; and I had enjoyed a conversation with Captain (now Admiral) Mahan upon his visit to England some years previously.

Admiral Evans was kind enough to place a torpedo-boat at my disposal, the *Worden*, in which I went from Pensacola to Pontagoorda. I astonished the signalman by reading a semaphore signal made to me by the flagship, before he did. The hospitality extended to me by the officers of the United States Navy was almost embarrassing in its profusion; and I shall always retain the pleasantest memories of that Service.

At a dinner of the Pilgrims' Society held at the Waldorf Hotel, New York, on 4th February, in the course of my address I observed that "battleships are cheaper than battles"; accidentally inventing a maxim of five words which does in fact contain the essence of naval policy, and which, touching the practical American imagination, ran throughout the United States.

In October, 1902, I was promoted to the rank of vice-admiral.

In February, 1903, having been offered the command of the Channel Fleet, I resigned my seat at Woolwich; where I was succeeded by Mr. Will Crooks, who was elected on 11th March by a majority of 3229.

## CHAPTER L

## THE CHANNEL FLEET

H.M.S. *Majestic*, first-class battleship, completed in 1895, sister ship to the *Magnificent* (which was built at Chatham during my time at that port as captain of the Steam Reserve), was one of nine ships of the same class; the rest being *Magnificent*, *Hannibal*, *Prince George*, *Victorious*, *Jupiter*, *Mars*, *Cæsar* and *Illustrious*. These represented an improvement on the preceding *Royal Sovereign* class, the *Renown*, a beautiful, somewhat smaller vessel, being a class by herself.

The *Majestic* is of 14,900 tons displacement, carries four 12-inch and twelve 6-inch guns, was of 17·5 knots designed speed, and had a complement of 772. My flag was hoisted in the *Majestic* on 17th April, 1903. The Channel Fleet, of which I was now in command, consisted of the *Majestic* (flag of vice-admiral), *Magnificent* (flag of Rear-Admiral the Hon. A. G. Curzon-Howe, and afterwards of Rear-Admiral the Hon. Hedworth Lambton), *Jupiter*, *Hannibal*, *Mars*, and *Prince George*, battleships; *Hogue* and *Sutlej*, armoured cruisers; and *Doris*, *Pactolus* and *Prometheus*, small cruisers.

Vice-Admiral Sir A. K. Wilson (now Admiral of the Fleet Sir A. K. Wilson, V.C., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O.), whom I relieved, was a consummate master of the art of handling a Fleet, a great tactician, a man inexorably devoted to the Service, to which he gave unsparing labour.

The Staff in the *Majestic* consisted of the flag-captain, Hugh Evan-Thomas; the flag-commander, Michael Culme-Seymour; the flag-lieutenant, Charles D. Roper; and the

secretary, John A. Keys. The commander was Henry B. Pelly (now Captain Pelly, M.V.O.).

As the efficiency of the Fleet depends upon its admiral, so the admiral depends upon the officers of his staff and upon the captains under his command; because it is theirs to execute his policy. I have always said that they were the officers who did the work and who were entitled to the credit of it. In the conduct of a Fleet, it is first of all necessary that the admiral and the officers of the Fleet should work together in a common understanding. For this reason, the captains should have access to the admiral at all times of the day or night, and in all matters affecting the organisation and fighting efficiency of the Fleet they should be in full possession of his views, and the admiral of their views.

Efficiency consists in the maintenance of the most rigid discipline, together with cheerfulness, contentment and smartness. To this end, definite and strict orders must be issued; no mistake or failure, however small, must be allowed to pass, and, conversely, merit should be commended; and as much leave should be given as the exigencies of the Service permit. The admiral is responsible for the whole administration, smartness and efficiency of the Fleet. The captains are responsible for the administration, smartness and discipline of the individual ships of the Fleet. The officers and men of the Royal Navy are loyal to the core; and when a mistake occurs, it is usually due, not to a deficiency on their part but, to the failure of the senior officer of the Fleet to give his orders clearly and to show beforehand what is to be done and how it is to be done.

But for the adequate treatment of the subject of Fleet Administration, a volume would be needed; the principles only can be indicated in these pages, together with such instances of its practice as may serve a useful purpose or may possess intrinsic interest.

The question of giving leave, for example, is of essential importance, because the comfort and contentment of officers and men so largely depend upon the system employed. In

the Channel Fleet, the system was to give week-end leave, from after dinner on Saturday, every week, the liberty men being due on board at seven o'clock on the following Monday morning, so that, if the Fleet were at Portland, they had only one night at home. Many of the men were therefore obliged to spend Sunday night in travelling; often, if they were not to break their leave, arriving at the port hours before they could get a boat off to their ship, and spending the interval shelterless and miserable. In the result the number of leave-breakers was usually very large.

By means of altering the system, the number was at once reduced to a fraction, such, for instance, as eight men, all of whom were accounted for. Under the new arrangement week-end leave was allowed once a month, when the liberty men of one watch left their ships on Friday after dinner instead of upon Saturday, and returned on board at noon on Monday, instead of at seven o'clock in the morning. Thus they had three nights at home once a month, instead of one night at home twice a month; and had to pay only one fare for three nights, instead of two fares for two nights. In these matters the question of expense should always be considered. Another advantage was that whereas heretofore one watch was always absent on Sundays, under the new arrangement all officers and men were on board upon two Sundays in every month.

The Navy, unlike the Army, is always on active service, and is perpetually practising in peace what it will be required to do in war. In the Navy, the only difference between peace and war is that in war the target fires back. Hence it is that the record of a command afloat consists almost entirely of incessant routine work; such as the evolutions of: *clear ship for action, boats pull round Fleet, collision and grounding stations, fire stations, out fire engine, moor ship, unmoor ship, out nets, in nets, taking in tow, casting off tow, let go sheet anchor, let go stern, kedge, bower anchors, weigh and cat sheet anchor by hand, in boom boats, let go and pick up both lifebuoys at sea, coaling, flag-signalling, man and arm boats, running*

*torpedoes, field-gun and company landing, rifle practice,* etc. These are matters of course. The Fleet is constantly exercised in manœuvres and in tactics; there is gunnery practice; and there are the periodical combined manœuvres.

In the Fleet under my command, the drills and exercises were particularly onerous; for it was a rule never to go to sea or to steam from port to port without practising some exercise or tactical problem. For every pound's worth of coal burnt, a pound's worth of training. Officers and men delighted in these exercises; and all (including the commander-in-chief) learned something from them.

In July, 1903, the Channel Fleet assembled at Spithead to welcome the United States Squadron, consisting of the *Kearsage*, flag of Admiral Cotton, *Chicago*, *San Francisco* and *Machias*. The American officers were entertained to lunch by the Pilgrims' Society, and it fell to me to propose the United States Navy, Admiral Cotton responding. H.R.H. the Prince of Wales accepted an invitation to breakfast on board the American flagship.

In August took place the combined manœuvres of the Channel, Home and Mediterranean Fleets; at their conclusion, the Fleets met in Lagos Bay for tactical exercises: 25 battleships, 42 cruisers, and gunboats and destroyers, under the supreme command of Admiral Sir Compton E. Domville, G.C.V.O., K.C.B.

Colonel Robert M. Thompson was a welcome guest of mine at this time, and subsequently in all the ships in which I flew my flag. Colonel Thompson afterwards published some observations upon the manœuvres in the *Evening Post*, U.S.A., from the point of view of an American officer who began his career in the United States Navy.

"When the three Fleets participating in those manœuvres were combined, there were 72 battleships and cruisers, with nearly 40,000 men, all under the command of one admiral: probably the strongest Fleet ever brought together in the history of the world. This enormous assemblage of vessels was handled without a single break. When the entire 72

ran to anchor in eight lines, had there been a straight-edge placed in front of them it would not have shown a ship, it seems to me, a foot out of position. They made a 'flying moor,' and when you consider that in point of time, at the speed the ships were going, they were only one minute apart, every seaman will appreciate how wonderfully they must have been handled."

Colonel Thompson very kindly presented a challenge shield for the best gun in the flagship of the Channel Fleet (afterwards Atlantic Fleet), to be inscribed with the names of the crew of the best gun at the annual gunlayers' competition; and at the same time generously placed in trust a sum of money the interest of which, amounting to £10 a year, was to be presented to the winning gun's crew. The record for the *Cæsar* while my flag was flown in that vessel was 18 hits out of 21 rounds in two minutes.

In September, 1903, the Fleet visited Scarborough; in pursuance of the principle that to afford the public opportunities for seeing the Fleet and for making acquaintance with the ships, arouses and maintains a healthy interest in the Service. Upon this occasion, I invited my old constituents at York to visit the Fleet. They came in thousands; but sad to say, the weather was so bad that they could not leave the shore.

When the Fleet was visiting Ireland, a certain worthy character, very well known in Kingstown, Dublin, whose chosen occupation is—or was—selling newspapers, came to me, as his countryman, on board the *Majestic*, to his intense excitement.

"Glory to God, Lord Char-less," he screamed, "is that yourself in the gold hat!" And he shrieked like a macaw, so that the men began to crowd on deck to see what was the matter. I had to tell him to pipe down, or they would turn the fire-engine on him.

The story of the accident to the *Prince George* and its repair serves to illustrate the emergencies of sea life. The Channel Fleet was engaged in manœuvres without lights off

Cape Finisterre, on the night of 17th October, 1903. Two midshipmen of the *Prince George* were relaxing their minds after the strain of the day's work with a hand at cards, when the game was interrupted by the entrance into the gun-room of the stem of the *Hannibal*, before which apparition the young gentlemen incontinently fled.

The signal instantly made by the *Hannibal*, "Have collided with the *Prince George*," was received on board the flagship at 9.41 p.m. During the next half-hour the mast-head flashing lamps winked their messages back and forth; and at 10.10 the *Prince George* signalled that there was a large hole in her gun-room, and that the submerged flat, cockpit and steering compartment were full of water.

The actual extent of the injury, as afterwards ascertained, caused by the impact upon the port quarter of a 15,000 ton battleship travelling at about nine knots, was an indentation in the form of an inverted pyramid, the apex at the level of the protective steel deck, the base level with the upper deck, measuring 24 feet 8 inches in height, and 6 feet 6 inches across at the upper deck, and diminishing to a crack at the apex, where the ship's side had been driven in to a depth of 1 foot 4 inches, by the impact of the *Hannibal*. In the centre of the indentation was a triangular rift, starting from the crack at the bottom, measuring 3 feet 4 inches in height and 1 foot 6 inches in breadth at the top.

At 11 o'clock p.m. I went on board the *Prince George*; examined into the damage; made a general signal to the Fleet ordering all hand-pumps and 14 foot planks and plenty of wedges to be sent on board the *Prince George*. Under Captain F. L. Campbell, perfect discipline had been maintained; the collision mat had been placed over the injury; and the men were working cheerily with hand-pumps and baling out with buckets the water from the gun-room. The rudder was out of action, the steam-pipes being full of water. The engineer-commander had wisely shut off steam when the helm was amidships, thus avoiding the jamming of the rudder. Had the rudder jammed to

starboard or to port, the difficulty of steering by the screws would have been greatly increased. The bulkheads closing in the compartments which were full of water, and all horizontal water-tight doors, were shored up with baulks of timber. But the water was still coming in, because, owing to the indentation in the side of the ship, the collision mat did not fit tightly to it.

The Fleet was ordered to proceed to Ferrol.

I sent on a boat to buoy the sunken rocks; a proceeding which aroused the suspicions of the Spanish authorities; who, however, upon learning the circumstances, were most courteous and obliging. The boat, however, was only able to get down one buoy.

The *Howe* had gone aground in the passage into Ferrol in 1892, and three vessels had gone aground subsequently.

Captain Campbell took the *Prince George* into Ferrol harbour, up the tortuous channel, which, owing to unbuoyed sunken rocks, is difficult and dangerous. Under my directions Captain Campbell steered by the screws, both screws going slow, or going astern slow with one propeller, and stopping the other, according to which way it was necessary to turn her head, and thus reducing her way if she were nearing a rock, and by this method keeping her under perfect control. At this time the ship was heavily down by the stern, drawing 25 feet 2 inches forward and 34 feet 6 inches aft. Her stern walk was flush with the water.

Immediately upon the arrival of the *Prince George* in Ferrol harbour (on Sunday, 18th October) divers and working parties were sent to her from all the other ships, and the Spanish Government courteously placed the resources of the dockyard at my disposal. The working parties worked day and night in three watches. On Monday, the *Hogue*, armoured cruiser, Captain John L. Marx, M.V.O., was placed alongside the *Prince George* and employed her salvage pumps.

The first thing to do was to prevent more water from coming in and to get rid of the water already in the ship.

Mats were made of canvas, thrummed with blankets, and these, with collision mats cut up, and shot mats, were thrust horizontally through the holes in the ship's side and wedged up so that the ends of the mats projected inside and out; and the moisture, causing them to swell, closed up the holes. At the same time the water was being pumped out and coffer-dams were being constructed on the inside of the ship.

The coffer-dam was a stout wooden partition built round the injury in the ship side, thoroughly buttressed from within the ship with stout baulks of timber. It thus formed a chamber, which was filled up with all sorts of absorbent and other material, such as seamen's beds, blankets, rope, hammocks, pieces of collision mats, gymnasium mattresses, cushions, biscuit tins, etc. Thus the coffer-dam formed a block, part absorbent and part solid, wedged and shored over the site of the injury. In addition, the splintered wood sheathing was cut away and trimmed up, and the mouth of the submerged torpedo tube was stopped up with blankets and wedges, and sealed up with $\frac{3}{16}$-inch steel plate bolted to the ship's side.

The extent of the injury may be exemplified by the amount of stuff used for filling up the coffer-dams and for stopping the leaks, which was: 10 shot hole stopper mats; two collision mats 15 feet by 15 feet; 350 seamen's hammocks, nine boats' covers, 14 coat-shoot covers, eight steaming covers, 11 coaling screens, 1500 yards of deckcloth, 23 shot-hole stopper mats cut into pieces, 57 blankets, one cwt. of oakum and cotton waste, and about 1000 wooden wedges, etc. etc. Over 145 tons of ammunition and stores were shifted in order to trim the ship.

The divers and carpenters of the Fleet worked continually in three watches from 3 p.m. on Sunday, 18th of October, till 6 a.m. on Friday, 23rd of October. There were employed: 24 engine-room artificers, 24 stokers, 88 carpenter ratings, 43 divers and attendants. The majority of the divers and carpenters were working in three watches

for the whole time; that is, from 30 to 40 working hours each. From the time stated, a period of 111 hours, 178 men were employed for various periods. The total "men-hours" amounted to 3898, of which 3219 were done by 27 divers and 60 carpenters. Two engineer sub-lieutenants from other vessels of the Fleet assisted the engineer staff of the ship.

At the completion of the repairs the *Prince George*, leaving Ferrol on 24th October, proceeded to Portsmouth escorted by the *Sutlej*. Although the weather was rough, the total amount of water shipped by the *Prince George* during the voyage was one gallon; a proof of the excellent work done by the artificers.

The repairs were carried out in six days altogether; the carpenters of the Fleet being under Mr. Lavers, chief carpenter of *Majestic*, and the divers of the Fleet under Mr. Manners, gunner of *Majestic*. The total cost of the stores purchased at Ferrol was £116, 2s. 4d. The whole incident is an example, but one of many, of the ability of the Fleet to execute its own repairs.

In the following year, the officers and men of the *Majestic* turned over to the *Cæsar*, in which ship my flag was hoisted on 2nd February, 1904, and in which it was flown during the remainder of the commission.

His Majesty the Emperor of Germany visited Gibraltar in March, in the s.s. *König Albert*, escorted by H.I.M. cruiser *Friedrich Karl*. His Majesty hoisted his flag as Honorary Admiral in the Royal Navy in the *Cæsar*. On the 20th, his Majesty honouring me with his presence at dinner in the *Cæsar*, the boats of the Fleet were lined on either side of the passage between the *König Albert* and the *Cæsar*; and when the Emperor proceeded between the lines, every boat burned a blue light, all oars were tossed, blades fore and aft, in perfect silence, the midshipmen conveying their orders by signs. After dinner, when it fell to me to propose his Majesty's health, and I stood up, glass in hand, as I

said the words "Emperor of Germany," a rocket went up from the deck above, and at the signal every ship in the Fleet fired a Royal Salute.

As the Emperor was leaving that night, the German flag and the Union Jack were hoisted on the Rock, half the search-lights of the Fleet being turned on the one flag, and half on the other. Precisely as the *König Albert* passed between the ends of the breakwaters, two stands of a thousand rockets, each stand placed upon the end of a breakwater, were ignited, and rushing upwards, met in a triumphal arch of fire high over the mast-heads of the Emperor's ship.

In the following October (1904) occurred one of those sudden and unforeseen emergencies which test alike the readiness of the Fleet and the temper of the nation. The Fleet was ready, and the nation lost its temper.

The Russo-Japanese war was then waging. The Channel Fleet, which had been coaling, left Portland at midday on 17th October for Gibraltar. On the 21st, the Fleet left Lagos. On the same day, just before midnight, the Russian Baltic Fleet, commanded by Admiral Rojdes-venski, who believed that his Fleet was about to be attacked by Japanese torpedo-boats, fired upon the British Gamecock Trawling Fleet in the vicinity of the Dogger Bank, in the North Sea. The steam trawler *Crane* was sunk, her captain and third hand were killed, and the Russian Fleet proceeded upon its course. Of these things we in the Channel Fleet were of course ignorant. The next day, the Channel Fleet was exercised in running torpedoes, and a torpedo attack for exercise upon Gibraltar was arranged for the night of the 23rd–24th.

In the meantime, the news of the North Sea incident had run about the world; democracy in England wanted war; and the occurrence of highly strained relations between Great Britain and Russia coinciding with the arrival of the Channel Fleet at Gibraltar, upon which the torpedo-boats were innocently making a night attack, might have resulted in their being mistaken for a real enemy. Fortunately,

no such catastrophe occurred. At seven o'clock upon the morning of the 24th, the Fleet was anchored in the harbour of Gibraltar; I learned the news; received my instructions by telegram, and made my dispositions.

On that day, peace and war hung in the balance. The Home, Channel and Mediterranean Fleets were instructed to act in concert, a detachment of the Mediterranean Fleet being ordered to reinforce the Channel Fleet at Gibraltar. The Russian Baltic Fleet was then proceeding to Vigo, a detachment of it being already at Tangier. On the following day (25th October) King Edward received a message from the Czar expressing the profound regret of his Imperial Majesty. It is a matter of history how the negotiations proceeded until an amicable settlement was arranged. The uncertainty, however, lasted until the 7th November.

It is a subject for thankfulness that there was no engagement. The Russian ships were so loaded with coal and stores that their upper-deck guns could not have been worked, and a fight would have been murder. Nor would war have been justified. The popular indignation was due to a misunderstanding, and the misunderstanding arose because the Russian admiral did not proceed to the nearest British port and explain the circumstances. If he believed that the Fleet was about to be attacked by torpedo craft, he was right to fire upon what he thought was the enemy, nor could he risk the time required to exchange recognition signals.

The result of the Russian admiral's mistake was to kindle a sudden resentment in this country which as nearly as possible forced a war between the two nations. It is one of the dangers inherent in the nature of democracy in all countries, that while democracy dislikes and hinders organisation and preparation for war, the moment that its vanity or self-respect is injured, democracy wants to fight. It is the impulse of the mob. The North Sea incident was one example of this disastrous tendency; the Spanish-American war was another.

But had war been most unfortunately declared by Great Britain in October, 1904, the Navy would have been quite ready. All it had to do was to proceed to the scene of operations. In this respect, it owns an advantage over the Army, because the Navy is always on active service, and does nothing in war which it is not doing every day in peace; if it is not fighting an enemy, it is fighting the elements; and whether in peace or in war, it goes to dinner at the same time. The Army, on the other hand, must do in war what it cannot do in peace; it changes from one condition to quite another; and the transition stage involves immense organisation, expense and discomfort.

In December, 1904, owing to the redistribution of the Fleet, the Channel Fleet became the Atlantic Fleet, which was under my command until the 5th March, 1905, when I hauled down my flag.

## CHAPTER LI

## BOAT RACING

THE enthusiasm which I have always felt for the noble sport of rowing induced me, while in command of the *Undaunted*, to publish some notes on the subject of men-of-war pulling races, and how to win them, the substance of which is here reproduced, in the hope that they may still prove of use in the Service.

One of the results of steam and machinery having succeeded masts, yards and canvas in a man-of-war was the creation of greater interest in pulling races. The regattas held in different fleets and squadrons had become yearly events, keenly looked forward to by both officers and men. This was very desirable, not only for the sake of the exercise which it encouraged (physical exercise of an arduous character being in a measure lost to the Service since the necessity for masts and yards had been so diminished) but, for the well-being and good feeling which healthful exercise invariably produces. Committees were formed, rules and regulations were laid down in a clear and business-like manner, and sums of money were given in prizes; which sums amounted on the Mediterranean Station to about £200—£50 or £60 being given by the Malta Canteen, and the remainder being raised by subscription among the officers of the Fleet.

Man-of-war boats, being built for fighting and weight carrying, are different from boats built for racing purposes on fresh water; but the prize will generally be gained by the crew of the man-of-war boat which has carefully and con-

sistently followed the fundamental principles upon which races pulled in racing boats on fresh water are won.

From the time the boat's crew is selected, until her stem has passed the winning-post, no detail which may add to the chance of a boat winning should be omitted, no matter how small it may appear.

In selecting a boat's crew, endeavour should be made to have the men near about the same height, in order to enable them all to take the same length of stroke with ease to themselves and to make their effort at the same moment. There should be no great disparity in their weights. The men all round should be a fairly level lot, which will make it easier for them to train as a whole. A crew resembles a chain, in that a crew is no stronger than its weakest man, just as a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. If a weak or an untrained man be placed in a boat, he will, soon after the start, throw extra work on the others. An indifferent crew of twelve men trained alike as to condition, length of stroke, and pulling accurately together, provided the boats are equal, will surely win a long race against a crew composed of ten vastly superior and two indifferently trained men. Similarly, a heavy boat with an indifferently sized crew, well trained, will undoubtedly beat a magnificent crew in a good boat, untrained.

A rule should be strictly enforced that individual members of one crew are not to be trained or to pull with another crew. It is very much the habit at men-of-war regattas to encourage the best oars in a ship to pull in two or three (sometimes in four or five) races. This practice is much to be deprecated, not only in the interest of the man himself, but in the interest of boat racing. If a man who pulls in several boats be laid up, he probably jeopardises the chances of winning several races.

The selection of a coxswain is a most important element in getting a crew together. He should be a man of a certain seniority, who commands attention, perfectly cool and collected, of good nerve and determination. Coxswains

defective in these qualities have lost many races, and coxswains possessing them have just pulled off many races. The training of the crew must as a rule depend entirely on the coxswain. For a 12-oared boat he should always, in order to provide for contingencies, train at least two more men than the number required in the race.

For smaller boats he should always arrange to train more men than the actual crew; many races have been lost owing to this detail having been neglected, and one of the crew having broken down in his training just before the race.

After the crew is selected, the coxswain with their help and assistance should draw up certain rules in order to ensure constant and regular practice, as well as to avoid those hindrances to training to be found after frequent visits to the canteen. One or two men taking a glass of beer too much during training has indirectly been the cause of many a race being lost, owing to the loss of practice to the crew as a whole, and to the disturbance of that harmony which must exist if a boat's crew is to be thoroughly trained.

Whether it is from his early training, or from the heavy and clumsy nature of his oars, or from the weight of the boats he has to pull, the British bluejacket, as a rule, pulls the worst oar possible to enable him to stay and pull through to the end a well-contested long race. If he be left to himself, he sits bolt upright on his thwart, beginning his stroke from that position, and apparently under the impression that the expression "Bend your back" indicates that he should bend his back forward instead of bending it aft; and totally unconscious that when he falls back towards the bow he only pulls his weight, but that when he bends forward towards the stern he pulls his strength *and* his weight; and he usually holds the loom of his oar with bent arms, frequently giving one or two jerks during the stroke, the last one of which may bring his oar out of the water and feather it considerably above his shoulder. He sometimes adds to these movements a rocking motion from side to

side, beginning by leaning towards the middle of the boat and then throwing himself towards the boat's side. He almost invariably has his head turned on his shoulder to see what his oar is doing, and he often wears a tight belt round his stomach. All these practices are entirely wrong and are totally opposed to a common-sense method of urging a boat at speed through the water.

When the boat's crew has been selected, the first duty of the coxswain is to show them how to pull and to ensure their motions being as one. Starting from their laying on their oars, he should make them stretch aft towards him as far as they can, with straight arms, sitting with their chests square to their oars, with their hands, not too far from and not too close to each other, firmly grasping the looms of the oars, with their arms at about right angles to the body and themselves looking the coxswain straight in the face (in river-pulling parlance "eyes in the boat"). It is impossible for a man to sit square to his oar if he is looking over his shoulder. The coxswain should begin practising his crew in the above position, without allowing them to catch the water until they are perfect.

The oars should catch the water with a firm and vigorous grip, absolutely simultaneously, the great effort of the man being made as the oar catches the water and not as it leaves it. The oar should be pulled through with a strong, steady, powerful stroke, no jerks whatever being given. A jerk bends or breaks an oar, but it does not send the boat ahead; and a man who pulls a steady stroke will stay three miles to the two miles of the man who jerks. The oar should never be feathered higher than is necessary. The oars should be feathered as level as possible with each other in order to ensure, as far as may be, that the blades of the oars catch the water absolutely together.

The coxswain should see that the crew wear no belts and that the waistbands of their trousers are loose about the waist. If a man's trousers are tight, they become irksome when he stretches aft as far as he can over his toes.

Each one of these details requires the earnest and constant attention of the coxswain, and he should see that each movement is carried out slowly, deliberately, quietly and perfectly, before he begins to get his crew into hard training. Spurts should always be avoided until a crew is fit to pull a race. When the coxswain wishes to spurt he should warn the crew for a spurt, state loudly the number of strokes he wishes to spurt, and then count them distinctly as they are pulled. The crew will then all put forth their greatest effort together. A spurt of three strokes may win a race, in the event of one of the opposing boat's crew catching a crab, or their stroke becoming unequal, or one or more of them being for the moment jaded.

The usual method for training adopted by coxswains is, however, of a different character. They order the men to pull hard from the moment they form their crew; they pay not the slightest regard to the important details which must be attended to in order that any crew may have a chance of winning a strongly contested race; they appear to think that a boat's crew cannot be trained unless the coxswain oscillates his body with an excitement which apparently borders on insanity; and they accompany these oscillations with weird and nervous cries such as "Hup with her!" "Lift her!" "Hang on her!" "Back on her!" "Squeeze her!" "Heave on her!" and similar noises. It is well to cheer up a crew with vocal accompaniments to their strokes, but that is by no means the most important factor in enabling them to win.

As a crew proceeds in its training and becomes slowly and quietly fit, dumb-bells and running will be found useful auxiliaries to pulling, particularly if the regular practice is stopped while the ship is at sea, but on no account should a coxswain allow one of his boat's crew to be over-trained. He should inquire after the health of the crew every morning, and should be most careful that they do not get a chill or a cold after practice. Some men require more work than others to get them in hard condition; a good coxswain will attend to this point, and will be careful that all his

boat's crew reach the starting-point in the pink of condition. He will also see that the thwarts are smooth and comfortable, the looms of the oars smooth and capable of being easily grasped, that the stretchers are secured so that they can neither slip nor carry away, and that every small detail (whose failure at the critical moment might jeopardise the chances of a race) is attended to. The coxswain must also attend to the incidentals of training, such as chafed stern and blistered hands, which if not treated may incapacitate a man from pulling in a race. Chafing on the stern is best treated by fomenting with hot water and the application of zinc powder afterwards. Blisters on hands are best treated by pricking them with a needle in the live flesh just outside the blister, pressing the water out of it, and wearing a rag over the injury until the two skins have set together again. A coxswain should also attend to the feeding of his crew during training, as no man can ever be produced fit at the starting-post who is too much addicted to pudding.

There are two illustrations which exemplify the necessity for a man to lean well aft with straight arms when commencing his stroke: (1) If a man were holding on to a ridge-rope or other rope for his life, he would never hold on with his arms bent, but would keep them quite straight for the simple reason that he could hold on longer and stronger. (2) If a man, in a sitting position, wished to raise a weight, the pulley used being rove through a block at his feet, he would never dream of sitting upright prising with his feet and leaning back from the upright position, but he would bend forward well on his toes and pull with his strength *and* his weight. Tackles and weights were rigged in the *Undaunted* in order that the men might learn these truths by practice.

Another important matter for a coxswain is to see that the conditions on all points are clearly made out in writing before the race, and are signed by himself and the coxswain of the competing boat. The date, the time, the boats, the composition of the crew, the stakes, which should always

be low (high stakes invariably lead to bad feeling) and which in no case should exceed 5s. per man and 10s. per coxswain; the precise course, *i.e.* the distance, and on which side, all marks, etc., are to be left, and also whether the oars are to be Service or private: all these things should be clearly defined. There has been more bad feeling bred between vessels owing to the want of such details having been clearly defined than to any other contingency that arises in boat racing. This is notably the case as to oars. Wherever it is possible a straight course should be selected, but if the length of the race does not admit of a straight course each boat should have its own separate buoy to round.

Coxswains should use every endeavour to get permission to have their boats hoisted for three or four days (with the exception of the time necessary for practice) before any forthcoming race in order to get the boat properly dry. They should get any ragged splinters planed off the keel, have all surplus paint scraped off and get the bottom of the boat as smooth as possible. They should also see the oars trimmed and exactly suited both by length and balance of weight to the small or great beam of the boat according to the thwart on which they are pulled.

Boat pulling is a healthy and a manly recreation, and if properly practised with friendly rivalry, can there be a doubt that it generates that activity of mind which is generally associated with activity of body? It also produces that courage, endurance, nerve and muscle which have so long been the distinctive features of the British race. It provokes a spirit of manliness, a generosity of mind and a love of fair play.

If all conditions are made out clearly and fairly, a beaten crew invariably accepts the verdict in a gallant and a chivalrous manner. After a race, no such remarks should be heard from the beaten crew as an offer to double or treble the stakes and pull again or words of similar character, showing either that the beaten crew cannot accept their defeat in a spirit worthy of the name of British man-of-war

men, or that owing to the conditions of the race not having been clearly defined, some misunderstanding has arisen which has naturally engendered a bitter feeling in the minds of those who have just suffered the poignancy of defeat.

The training and practice which are necessary to put the boats' crews of men-of-war into that state of condition in which they may reasonably expect to win a race, must to a large extent cultivate those habits of discipline which are so essential for the comfort and efficiency of our great Service.

Admiral Sir George Tryon, while he was commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean, and while I was in command of the *Undaunted*, caused a boat to be specially built to race my boat. We had six races, all of which the *Undaunted* won. The *Undaunted's* racing boat was built flatter in the floor than the ordinary pattern of Service boats. One of the races with Sir George Tryon's boat was rowed in a whole gale of wind, over a course of four miles. The *Undaunted's* boat was half-full of water, and three of the knees of the thwarts were broken, when she crossed the line. This kind of racing is extremely heavy work, for the Service boats are massively built in order to carry weight, such as guns, stores, ammunition. The oars are so heavy that there is nearly as much labour involved in lifting the oar from the water and coming forward as in pulling it through the water.

The admiral-superintendent's boat at Malta was never beaten. She was a beautiful boat, built by Maltese, and manned by a splendid Maltese crew. I raced her with my crew twice, once when I was captain of the *Undaunted*, and again when I was second in command in the Mediterranean (with flag in *Ramillies*), and lost the race on both occasions. In the second race, the Maltese, having the inside place, resorted to the well-known manœuvre of steering us off all the way up to the buoy and then turning sharply to round it.

While stationed at Alexandria during the time of my command of the *Undaunted*, we used to have a regatta open to all comers, any boat and any rig, every Friday. The

Arab boats used to enter. Their great sail area and flat bottoms gave them a great advantage in running, or on the wind; but they could not tack. They were obliged to wear in a beat to windward, because their sail dipped before all. I beat them twice with a copy of Captain (now Admiral) Fitzgerald's racing rig, in the launch. A Service launch is of course built for heavy work and for carrying loads, such as supplies and ammunition. The Service rig has one mast, with mainsail and staysail, called the De Horsey rig. Captain Fitzgerald stepped the single mast aft, and fitted a bigger spar forward, equipped it with a big dipping lug, abolished the staysail, and used ballast. The object of the De Horsey rig was to give a sail equipment with as little gear as possible. Captain Fitzgerald's object was to race; and I may take this opportunity of saying that I consider Admiral Fitzgerald to have been the finest boat-sailer whom I have met in the Service.

When he was commander of the *Agincourt* in the Channel Squadron, he won the first Admiral's cup presented in the Navy, in 1872. In that year, Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby gave a cup to be sailed for by the boats of the Channel Squadron, being the first admiral to present a cup. The conditions, as described by Admiral Fitzgerald in his *Memories of the Sea*, were: "Any sails, any rig, any shaped false keel, but no sinking ballast; that is to say, the boat must float when full of water; and there is generally a handicap for size."

While I was commander of the *Thunderer*, I fitted the steam pinnace as a racing boat, taking out the engines and boilers and equipping her with a big cutter rig. The boat had a yacht section, but was without a heavy keel, so that I had to ballast her heavily. She went very fast in a light breeze, but when a puff came she would heel over and take in water. In case of accident, I ballasted her with a length of chain cable, shackled to ringbolts on her bottom, the other end made fast to a rope and a buoy. Rear-Admiral William Dowell, who was then second in command of the Channel

Squadron (afterwards Admiral Sir William Montague Dowell, G.C.B.), challenged me to a race in Portland Harbour. Admiral Dowell sailed in his six-oared galley, which carried a private rig of two dipping lugs. I was confident of beating him, but the admiral knew better. He knew I should have to ease my sheets when the breeze freshened. At first I went away from him, but when I was just inside the breakwater, a puff came, over went the boat, and it went down under me. Dowell, seeing that I was swimming safely and that the boats of the Fleet were coming to pick me up, went on and won the race.

When I went to dine with him that night, he greeted me with:

"Last time I saw you, you were swimming about in the harbour."

In the meantime, owing to the device of ballasting my boat with chain cable and buoying the end of it, we were able to pick her up. The *Thunderer* came over the place where she was sunk, hauled the cable up to the hawse pipe, and hove the boat to the surface.

My old friend, Admiral Sir William Montague Dowell, G.C.B., was a most distinguished officer. He served in the China war, 1840–1, served as gunnery lieutenant of the *Albion* in the Black Sea, and was promoted for services with the Naval Brigade at Sevastopol; served again in China, in 1857, being present at the capture of Canton; commanded the *Barrosa* in the straits of Simonoseki, 1864, being specially mentioned; received the C.B. for services in Japan. He was A.D.C. to the Queen; commanded the West Coast of Africa and Cape of Good Hope Station, 1867–71; after having been second in command of the Channel Squadron, senior officer on the Coast of Ireland, and vice-admiral in command of the Channel Squadron, he was temporarily attached to the Mediterranean Fleet and served in the Egyptian war of 1882, receiving the K.C.B., and the thanks of the House of Commons. He was afterwards commander-in-chief in China, and subsequently commander-in-chief of Devon-

port. He was one of the Three Admirals who framed the Report upon the Naval Manœuvres of 1888, in which were formulated the principles of British naval supremacy.

I won many races in a *Una* boat, the *Weasel*, built at Cowes, during the time of my command of the royal yacht *Osborne*. The Prince of Wales built a similar boat. Prince Louis of Battenberg, steering the Prince's boat, beat me in a most exciting race, in which the betting was long odds on my boat. The fact was, that trying to be very clever, I put too much ballast in the boat, and so lost the race.

## CHAPTER LII

## THE MEDITERRANEAN STATION

FORTY-FOUR years had elapsed since I was a midshipman in H.M.S. *Marlborough*, flagship in the Mediterranean, when I hoisted my flag in H.M.S. *Bulwark* as commander-in-chief upon that station, in June, 1905. Those changeful years had seen the Old Navy out and the New Navy in; their revolutions had transformed the whole material aspect of the Navy; and the essential spirit of the Navy, adapting itself to new conditions, remained unaltered. One result, perhaps inevitable, of the swift progress of scientific invention, was that the public attention was concentrated upon purely material matters, regarding the Navy as a fighting machine automatically operated; and conceiving of officers and men as workers in a factory, who had nothing to do but to press buttons and to manipulate levers. This unfortunate delusion was fostered by the politicians, who were quick to use it for their own ends.

The Mediterranean Fleet consisted of *Bulwark* (flag), *Formidable*, *Implacable*, *Irresistible*, *London*, *Prince of Wales*, *Queen*, *Venerable* (flag of second in command, Vice-Admiral Sir Harry T. Grenfell, K.C.B., C.M.G., and afterwards of Rear-Admiral Francis C. B. Bridgeman, M.V.O.); three attached cruisers, three special service vessels; the Third Cruiser Squadron, *Leviathan*, (flag of Rear-Admiral the Hon. Hedworth Lambton, C.V.O., C.B.), *Carnarvon*, *Lancaster*, *Suffolk*, two attached ships, and 22 destroyers.

The Staff consisted of: chief of staff, Captain Frederick

C. D. Sturdee, C.M.G., M.V.O.; flag-commander, Fawcet Wray; flag-lieutenant, Charles D. Roper (signal officer); flag-lieutenant, Herbert T. C. Gibbs; secretary, Fleet Paymaster John A. Keys; engineer-captain, Edwin Little; intelligence officer, Major John M. Rose, R.M.A. The flag-captain was Osmond de B. Brock; the commander, Hugh P. E. T. Williams.

The Mediterranean is the finest training station in the world; and it is the more to be regretted that the Mediterranean Fleet is always so deficient in numbers, that Fleet training must be conducted at a disadvantage. Eight battleships represent the smallest practicable unit for tactical purposes, nor does that number allow sufficient margin for the necessary deductions due to the absence of ships under repair or refitting. Upon one occasion, six out of the eight were absent under repair at one time, and in all cases the absence was unavoidable.

The eight battleships required twenty attached cruisers, as compared with the three allocated. Although improvements had been effected, the Fleet in 1905 was still deficient in auxiliaries, such as fleet colliers, repair ships, depot ships.

The popular and political delusion that under modern conditions the duties of the naval officer have become mechanical is so far from the reality, that, in truth, they have never been more complex and onerous; nor is it possible that they should be rightly performed in war, in default of the most assiduous practice in peace. It is thus the business of an admiral constantly to exercise the Fleet both collectively and individually; and as the discharge of that duty tasks his energies to the utmost, there is little to record during a sea command except the cruises, exercises and manœuvres which constantly occupy a Fleet.

In June, 1905, for instance, the Mediterranean Fleet left Malta and proceeded upon a cruise; met the Atlantic Fleet at the end of July; exercised combined manœuvres with the Atlantic Fleet; proceeded upon another cruise, and so

on; never going to sea without practising some exercise or manœuvre. All exercises and manœuvres of importance were treated in a memorandum, in which was explained the lessons to be learned from them, and which was circulated to the officers of the Fleet.

Every morning when the Fleet was at sea, except on Sundays and in very bad weather, small tactical and turning movements were executed from 7.30 to 8 a.m., the movements of each individual ship being carried out by the officer of the watch, all lieutenants taking it in turn to relieve the deck, and being put in charge of the ship for this period of time. The captains did not interfere in the handling of the ship, unless the officer of the watch placed the ship, or a consort, in a position of danger. The lieutenants themselves made out the commander-in-chief's signals and their purport without the assistance of the captain or of the yeoman of signals. Officers of the watch were informed that they need not be afraid of making a mistake; for, everyone was liable to make a mistake; and the rest of the Fleet learned more when an error occurred than when all went smoothly and correctly.

During the forenoons, there was usually practised some short manœuvre in which an admiral or a captain took charge of the Fleet, and manœuvred it as he pleased, the commander-in-chief reserving to himself the right to negative any signal which he might consider dangerous or useless. After the admirals and captains had manœuvred the Fleet as a whole, it was divided into opposing Fleets officers, selected by the commander-in-chief, taking charge of these Fleets. Each squadron endeavoured to gain the initial position or advantage. Once that position was obtained, the Fleets were ordered to separate, and two other officers respectively took charge of the opposing squadrons.

Great care was observed that orders relative to speed and to the distance within which opposing fleets were not to trespass, were rigidly observed. Officers were informed that all peace manœuvres must be regarded as a game, and that

no game should be played unless the rules were implicitly obeyed. The principle was that no manœuvre should last very long, being much more instructive if it were short, and were frequently practised.

The practice of taking the soldiers for short voyages was instituted. About twenty men of the Royal Garrison Artillery at Malta, with an officer, a sergeant and a corporal, were embarked in each vessel, the non-commissioned officers and men messing and working with the Royal Marines.

The periodical delivery of lectures by officers of all branches upon Service subjects was instituted, the lectures taking place under the presidency of the commander-in-chief at the Royal Naval Canteen, Malta. Discussions were encouraged, and a great deal of interest and enthusiasm was aroused.

My old friend and distinguished countryman, Sir George White, who was then Governor of Gibraltar, asked me to deliver a lecture to the soldiers of the garrison upon the advantages of temperance. In dealing with this subject, I always tell men to box, run, ride, row, and by all means to get physically fit, when they would be in a condition they would not forfeit for the sake of indulgence. On this occasion, I said that, although I was over sixty years of age, I could outlast a youngster in endurance, adding that "I never took any liquor now." The address must have been reported in the English papers; for I received a letter from a dear old lady (quite unknown to me) telling me how thankful she was that I, as a public man, had given up the dreadful vice of intoxication.

After I had consulted the head of every department in every ship collectively, two detailed plans of war organisation were drawn up: one, a plan of preparation for war; two, a plan for immediate action. The first contained the procedure to be followed if war was expected; the second, the procedure to be followed on the eve of an engagement. Both covered every detail of the internal organisation of every ship in the Fleet, and specified the duties of every officer, man and

boy. These plans were circulated to the officers of the Fleet.

Another important element of preparation for war is the rapid and efficient repair of defects. Under the old system, a defect which could not be repaired by the ship's artificers—as for instance, a piece of work involving a heavy casting or forging—was left until the ship visited the dockyard, when the dockyard officials came on board, took measurements, executed the work and fitted it to the ship. The result was that there were many complaints of defective fitting.

Under the new system, introduced in the Mediterranean Fleet, all repairs which could not be effected in the ship, were specified by the ship's artificers, who also made measured drawings of the new work required. The specifications and drawings were forwarded by the senior officer to the dockyard, with directions that the work should be executed as soon as possible, so that upon the arrival of the ship at the dockyard, the required fitting would be at once supplied to the ship. It would then be fixed by the ship's artificers who had furnished the working drawings to the dockyard, and who, provided that the work was rightly executed, would thus be responsible both for accuracy of manufacture and of fitting. By this means, delay was avoided and the work was efficiently and promptly executed.

Before I left England to take up my appointment, I resolved to do my best to eradicate that curse of the Service, Malta fever. The authorities were naturally sceptical of my success; for, although many attempts had been made to solve the problem, no one had hitherto succeeded in abating the scourge.

Certain obvious precautions were at once enforced. Junior officers were not allowed to remain on shore after sunset, without overcoats; all milk received on board was boiled; the Fleet was kept away from Malta as much as possible during the dangerous months of June, July, August and September; and the officers and men of those ships which were at Malta during the summer, were sent upon long

route marches and were afforded plenty of exercise to keep them fit. These measures reduced the number of cases of Malta fever from 197 of the previous year (1905) to 137.

But the main evil remained. A large number of cases contracted fever in the Royal Naval Hospital, to which they had been sent to be treated for other maladies, often requiring surgical treatment only. Great credit is due to Deputy-Inspector-General Robert Bentham for the improvements effected by his care and foresight. In order to prevent infection, every cot was furnished with mosquito curtains; the traps of all drains were kept clean and disinfected; and all milk supplied to the hospital was boiled. The patients disliked boiled milk; and as infected milk was smuggled in, the use of milk was forbidden altogether. An isolation ward for fever cases was provided. All openings were fitted with wire gauze and double doors.

The result was that in May, June and July, 1906, there were no cases of fever contracted in the hospital.

Finding that fever patients recovered so soon as they were to the westward of Gibraltar, the practice of sending all such cases away in the *Maine* hospital ship was instituted with excellent results. For example, of sixty-two cases sent away, all but fourteen had recovered by the time the ship reached England.

Deputy-Inspector-General Bentham was recommended by me for his services to the Admiralty; but his services did not meet with the recognition they deserved.

Shortly afterwards, the Malta Fever Commission com pleted the work, by discovering the bacillus of the disease, and by abolishing the goats, whose milk was the chief source of infection.

In October, 1905, the Prince and Princess of Wales, on their way to India in the *Renown*, were met at the Straits of Messina by the Mediterranean Fleet.

The centenary of the battle of Trafalgar, 21st October, 1905, was celebrated by the Mediterranean Fleet at Malta. A naval review was held on shore in the forenoon, three

thousand officers and men taking part in it. Those captains of guns, including the Royal Marines, who had made five hits or more in the gunlayers' competition, 117 in number, were formed into a company on the right of the line and marched past first. At four o'clock in the afternoon, flags were half-masted. At half-past four o'clock, guards and bands being paraded facing aft, officers and men fallen in on the quarter-deck facing aft and uncovered, the colours of His Majesty's ships were dipped slowly and reverently; the bands played the Dead March, and at its conclusion the colours were slowly rehoisted.

His Majesty King Edward VII honoured the flagship with a visit on 14th April, 1906. About an hour before the King came on board, the awning over the quarter-deck caught fire, owing to a short circuit of the electric light. Lieutenant Gibbs, with great pluck and presence of mind, instantly climbed upon the awning and extinguished the flames with his hands, which were severely burned.

In March, 1906, the historic International Conference summoned to deal with Moroccan affairs, was assembled at Algeçiras. Conversing with some of the delegates, it seemed to me that an informal and a convivial meeting might cheer them up and perhaps help to cement a friendly understanding; and I invited them all to dine on board the flagship. In order to avoid the bristling difficulties connected with arrangements of precedence, the delegates were all embarked at the same time in the s.s. *Margherita*, lent to me for the occasion; and were all disembarked at the same time upon a platform erected at the level of the upper deck, being received by the full guard and saluted. For the same reason, no national anthems were performed. The President of the Conference, the Duke of Almodovar, was given the place of honour at the dinner, the rest of the delegates sitting in the order of their seniority. The single toast of the evening was to "all Sovereignties and Republics," which needed no reply. After dinner, during which the massed bands of the Fleet played

on the upper deck, the company adjourned to the quarter-deck. I was informed by one of the distinguished guests that the meeting had done much good, as the delegates had not hitherto had an opportunity of meeting informally together.

Upon the return of the delegates, magnesium lights arranged upon the ends of the breakwater were lighted as the *Margherita* passed between them, and a searchlight display of 140 lights was given by the Fleet.

Vice-Admiral Sir Harry Grenfell, second in command, was a most distinguished officer, a great sportsman, an accomplished athlete, and a charming friend. His premature death was a sad loss to the Service. Grenfell was so powerful a man that he could take a small pony under one arm and walk about with it. I saw him perform this feat at a luncheon party given by the Governor of Algeria, to whom the pony belonged.

Grenfell told me the story of his extraordinary adventure in Albania. The country is infested with wild and savage dogs, which are apt to attack the traveller. The Albanians do not resent the dogs being killed, if they are slain with a knife in self-defence; but to shoot them the Albanians consider a mortal offence. Being aware of their sentiments, I used to take with me a couple of Marines armed with boarding pikes when I went shooting in Albania.

But when Grenfell went, he was accompanied by another naval officer, named Selby, who, upon being attacked by a native dog, shot it. A party of Albanians thereupon closed in upon Grenfell and Selby and attacked them. There was a fierce struggle, in the course of which one of the guns went off, the charge killing an Albanian. The accident so infuriated the rest that they beat Selby, as they thought, to death. They smashed in his skull, so that the brains protruded, and left him for dead. Then they took Grenfell, lashed his hands behind his back, set him on a three-legged stool, put the bight of a rope round his neck,

and secured the other end to the branch of a tree, hauling it taut. There they left him, in the hope that the stool would slip and that he would be strangled. He remained in that position for three hours.

In the meantime the interpreter who had come with Grenfell had run to fetch an official of the country. The official arriving, released Grenfell. Selby, dreadfully wounded as he was, actually walked back to the ship, and lived until the next day.

But strong as Grenfell was, his terrible experience left him with an extraordinary optical affliction. He was constantly haunted by the illusion of an enormous ape, which he plainly saw both by day and by night. He used to behold the phantom enter the room and sit on a chair; and if a visitor came to see him, he would ask the visitor to take the chair upon which the ape was sitting; whereupon the spectre would move to another place. I am glad to say that he was eventually cured of this distressing affection.

An Irish lieutenant of a regiment at Malta told me the following pathetic story in a broad Irish brogue, his natural way of speaking:

"Me little brother and meself were very fond of rhabitting. The loikely place was the family cemetery. There were lashings of holes within it. One day by-and-by the ferret himself laid up, and with that we dug him (bad cess to the work). We out wid a shkull. Me little brother he says, 'That's profanation; it will be the shkull of an ancestor,' says he. 'Niver moind that,' says I, 'we'll have a joke wid it.' I ensconced it in me pockut. On getting within, I passed through the kitcher and dhropped me ancestor's shkull (God forgive me!) into the stock-pot. All went very well till dinner and we through wid it, when the cook burst in in great qualms, and sheloodering at haste to me poor mother, says she,

"'Glory be to God and save us, Milady, we are all desthroyed intirely, for there's a man in the soup,' she says."

The same lieutenant went out shooting quail at Malta with a revolver, and hit a Maltese in the wrong place, for which error he was heavily fined.

When children's picnic parties were given on board the *Bulwark*, a quantity of sand was heaped in a well upon the quarter-deck; spades and buckets were provided; and the children dug in the sand to find presents. When that entertainment failed, the bluejackets, ensconced in barrels, performed Aunt Sally, bobbing up their heads, at which the children threw light sticks, and which they invariably missed. I noticed a small boy of about seven years old, a Spaniard, who stood a little way off, contemplating this performance with his large dark eyes, his hands behind his back. Presently, with air of abstraction, he strolled quietly to the back of a barrel, where the deck was littered with thrown sticks. Suddenly he picked up a stick, dodged swiftly to the front of the barrel, and as the seaman's head shot up, hit the poor fellow right on the nose, making it bleed. Then the little wretch roared with laughter and capered in his joy.

On the 19th January, 1907, I took leave of the Fleet with very great regret, and left Malta in the *Bulwark*, homeward bound.

## CHAPTER LIII

## SPORTING MEMORIES

### I. Riding and Driving

I RODE my first race in Corfu, as a midshipman. An old colonel of artillery, who knew my father, said to me:

"You are a Beresford, an Irishman, and a sailor, and if you can't ride, who can? You shall ride my horse in the next race. He is a hard puller, and if only you stick on he will win."

He *was* a hard puller, and he did win. I rode in my midshipman's uniform, and lost my cap, and won the race. But the horse ran three times round the course before I could pull him up.

I have always said that you can do anything with horses if you understand them. It was at a dinner party in my house in Eaton Square that I offered to put that statement to the proof. The table at which my guests were sitting was designed with a large tank in the centre, which was filled with running water, in which grew ferns and aquatic plants. Gold fish swam in the water, and little new-born ducklings oared upon the surface. This miniature lake was diversified with spirals and fountains fashioned of brass, which I had turned myself.

Among the company was an old friend, Harry Chaplin, than whom there is no finer sportsman in England, and who was perhaps the best heavy-weight rider to hounds in England.

I told my guests that I would bring in one of my horses

(a bad-tempered thoroughbred), that I would lead him from the street, up the steps into the hall, round the dining-table and so back to the street without accident. Straw was laid on the steps and passages; and I led in the horse. He lashed out at the fire with one leg, just to show his contempt for everything and everybody; but there was no casualty.

The next day, I was driving the same horse in a buggy, when something annoyed the animal, and he kicked the buggy to pieces, upset us in the road, and broke my old coachman's leg.

My uncle, Henry Lord Waterford, once made a bet that he would ride one of his hunters over the dining-room table in his house at Melton, and won his bet, the horse actually leaping the table towards the fire.

Horses are like Irishmen: they are easily managed if you know how to handle them.

The famous horse-fair of Cahirmee is no more. But it was at Cahirmee, according to tradition, that Irishmen acquired their habit of breaking one another's heads. At Cahirmee Fair, the boys slept in tents, their heads outwards; and it was the custom of the wilder spirits to go round the tents at night, and playfully to rap the heads of the sleepers with shillelaghs. One of the sleepers was most unfortunately killed by a blow, and his slayer was brought before the magistrate, who condemned him. Hereupon the policeman who had arrested the prisoner addressed the magistrate:

"Your Honour," says he, "sure it is very well known that the deceased had a terrible thin skull upon him, and I would be wanting in my duty not to be telling your Honour the way the poor man's skull was dangerous to him."

"'Tis the truth," broke in the prisoner eagerly. "Sure your Honour's honour will be letting me off, for everyone knows that no man having a thin skull does be having anny business to be at Cahirmee Fair."

During the paper-chases which we got up at Valparaiso, I met with a nasty accident. My horse rose at some posts and rails, and crashed through the top bar; after which I knew

no more except a shower of stars and darkness. When I recovered consciousness, I found myself being borne home on horseback, lying face down on the Chilian saddle, which is made of thick rugs. The horse was being led by a Chilian farmer, who was, I thought, taking me to the mortuary. But he was really a good Samaritan. He had bathed my wounded face with *aguadente*, and placed me on his horse. The scent and sting of the *aguadente* revived the moribund, and by the evening I was all right again.

In the *Research*, in 1867, we had a quartette of hunting men, Cæsar Hawkins, Lascelles, Forbes and myself. We used constantly to hunt together. Lascelles was one of the best riders I have ever known. He could take a horse through or over anything. The *Research* was stationed at Holyhead at that time, because it was believed that the Fenians had planned to destroy the steamers running from Holyhead to Ireland and back. I used to go across to Ireland from the *Research* to hunt with the Ward Union near the Curragh, and return the same night. A long way to cover.

"The Three Brothers'" race is still remembered in Ireland. It was ridden by Lord William, Lord Marcus, and myself. Each of us had his backers, but the crowd was at first firmly convinced that the result of the race had been arranged between us. I believe I had the best horse, but he was unfortunately taken with an attack of influenza while he was coming over from England in the boat. Lord William won by a short head from Lord Marcus, and I was a length behind. Lord Marcus reminds me that each of us, while secretly fancying himself intensely, enthusiastically eulogised the other.

I quote the enthusiastic account of the race written by an eye-witness, which appeared in *The Waterford News* at the time. (*The Waterford News*, 4th January, 1901. Account by Mr. Harry Sargant, from his *Thoughts upon Sport*, and description in *The Waterford News*, The Three Brothers' Race, 30th April, 1874.)

"Lords Charles, William, and Marcus Beresford had a sweepstake of 100 sovs. each, p.p., three miles, over the Williamstown Course, twelve stone each, owners up. Lord Charles rode Nightwalker, a black thoroughbred horse, and bred by Billy Power, the sporting tenant of the course; Lord William rode Woodlark, a grey mare; and Lord Marcus was on a bay gelding called The Weasel. They each wore the Beresford blue, Lord Charles with the ancestral black cap, while the others had white and blue caps as distinguishing emblems.

"No racecourse in Ireland, except Punchestown and Fairyhouse, ever had more people on it than Williamstown had on that, the most memorable day in its annals. Old men and women who had never before seen a race came 50 miles to see 'the Brothers' race.'" (Many persons slept on the ground on the preceding night.) "Not a person, except the too aged and incapacitated, was in a farmhouse within 10 miles of the course, while the city was as deserted as if plague-stricken—all, all, flocked to Williamstown. Excitement rose to boiling pitch as the three brothers filed out of the enclosure and did the preliminary. I fancy now I see them jogging side by side to the starting-post, where poor Tom Waters awaited them, ready with ensign in hand to send them on their journey. The only delay was while he delivered a short but sporting speech to these three lads, when away they went, boot to boot. The pace was a cracker from the start, but none made the running more than another, for all three were girth to girth most of the journey, and at no time did two lengths divide the first and last till just before the finish. Yes, every post they made a winning-post; and ding-dong did they go at each other, though, of course, riding like sportsmen. Fence after fence was charged and cleared by them locked together, and it was not until Nightwalker was beaten, just before the last fence, they separated. A determined struggle between Woodlark and The Weasel then ensued; and, after a desperate finish, old Judge Hunter gave the verdict to the former 'by a short head.'

"Never was seen a better race of its class, nor was any ever ridden more determinedly for victory. The scene of excitement on Williamstown Course before and after it beggars description. Not a mouth was shut or a voice lower than its highest pitch."

Two Irishmen who came from Australia, used to ride with our hounds, the Curraghmore, in County Waterford. They were both very hard riders and both so short-sighted as to be nearly blind. For these reasons they used closely to follow my brother and myself; and we used to do our best to get out of their way, as they were always on the top of us, but in vain. For whenever they saw us sheering off they used to shout out,

"Go on, Lord Charles,"—or Lord William, or Lord Marcus, as the case might be—"go on, I can't see but I can ride."

My brother Bill and I got a real good start one day with the Curraghmore hounds. We led the field till we came to the river Clodagh. The hounds swam the river, and we followed them, with the water over our horses' girths. In jumping out, Bill got on the hard bank, but in the place where I went, the water had undermined it. I was on a little horse called Eden, which was not 15 hands, but which had won the jumping prize at the Horse Show in Dublin. He was "a great lepped harse," as the Irish say. He did his best, but the bank gave under him, and he came right back on me in the water. When I got up, both my stirrup leathers had slipped, and I saw the irons showing at the bottom of the river. I had to go down under water to recover them. I got out and rode to a public-house, the landlord of which was a tenant of my brother Waterford.

"For the love of God, Lord Char-less, how did ye get that way at all at all?" says he.

I told him, and,

"Can you give me a suit of clothes, as they will draw Ballydurn in the afternoon, and I must be there?" said I.

"Divil a suit have I got," says he. "But there, his

Riverence is just afther changing his clothes within, and I'm sure he'll be glad and proud if you esconced yourself in his clothes, and he big enough to cover two of yez."

I went upstairs, and there I found his Reverence's clericals on the bed, and with that I stripped and put on his vest, shirt, trousers and clerical coat. His great boots were elastic-sided, and I had to put two copies of the *Cork Examiner* newspaper in each to make them fit me. He was a big man, over six feet high and weighing about twenty stone; and his trousers were so long that when I turned them up half-way to the knee, they still could go into the top of the boots, in which I stowed them, tying string round the boots to keep the trousers in. The trousers were so wide round the waist, that I had to button the top button round on the opposite side brace button behind. The coat was so long that it reached down half-way between my knees and ankles.

Thus ecclesiastically garbed, I rode to the cover, and waited under a bank for nearly an hour, hoping to hear the hounds. My teeth were chattering with cold, and all I had on of my own was my hat. At last I heard the horn, and at once a fine old fox broke. I waited till he got afield and then knocked a bawl out of myself that would terrify a neighbourhood. Out came the hounds and me on top of them, with two fields' start, as I was wrong side of the cover down wind concealed under a big bank. Then came over twenty minutes as hard as legs could lay on to ground, and all the field wondering who his Reverence could be that was leading the field, and where in God's name did he come from—all except Bill. He knew that I had fallen in the river, he knew Eden, and he laughed so that he could hardly sit his horse. When the field came up, fox to ground, they nearly fell off their horses with laughing. One farmer said to me:

"Begob, your Riverence, you will never be so near heaven again as on the top of that terror of a high bank ye lepped!"

There was a lady, a very hard and jealous rider, who often hunted with our hounds, and who was told one day that she must hold her own with the Curraghmores, as some ladies from the neighbouring packs were out.

"Show me a Tipperary or a Kilkenny woman till I lep on the shmall of her back," quoth she.

Every sportsman knows the delight of getting a good start and of keeping it. I was riding with the Tipperaries, when Eden jumped a tremendous big mearing (boundary); the others who faced it either fell or refused; and thus we got three fields ahead of the rest of the field, and ran the fox straight to ground in thirty-five minutes, Eden keeping right on the tail of the hounds the whole way. Two or three times I have got such a start and kept it, another occasion being in Leicestershire, when I was riding a horse belonging to my sister-in-law.

Once with the Meath I got a long start by seeing which way the wind was; and cutting a corner, I observed a man with a green collar doing the same, and we both kept our lead. A fortnight later, stag-hunting upon Exmoor, I got well away, when I saw a man ahead of me on my left. At the end of the run, I observed that he had a green collar, and found it was the same man. A curious coincidence.

Riding another of my Irish horses, Sea Queen, we were going down a by-road, the hounds being on the right, when we came to an iron gate, nearly 6 feet high. I was bending down to pull back the bolt, when the mare suddenly jumped. She got her fore-part over, and it took me half an hour to clear her. I was obliged to break the gudgeon of the gate.

Hunting at home at Curraghmore, I used to tell my brothers, all of whom were cavalry officers, that I would engage to pick a hundred seamen from the Fleet, who had never been on a horse, and to make them in six weeks as fine a troop of cavalry as any in the kingdom. Naturally, they did not believe me, and chaffed the life out of me. But when my brother Lord William went to South Africa,

to the Zulu war of 1879, he commanded three troops of irregular cavalry, the men of which had been recruited straight from the merchant service. His troop sergeant-major had been a mate. When my brother returned, he acknowledged that my boast was justified. The fact was that in the old sailing days, the sailor was so agile, athletic and resourceful a creature, so clever with his hands, and so accustomed to keeping his balance in every situation, that he could speedily acquire the seat and the skill which other men must as a rule learn in childhood or not at all. Anyhow, the seamen could stick on.

Many men never become easy on horseback. My experience in the hunting field taught me that a man who is always fussily shouting, "Where the devil are the hounds, sir?" and so forth, is always nervous. I have sometimes answered, "Keep calm, sir, keep calm. It's not a general action."

For a short time I was acting-Master of the Buckhounds, in place of my brother Waterford, when he was laid up with an accident in the hunting field, from which, poor fellow, he never recovered. As he was galloping through an open swinging gate, the gate closed on his horse as the horse was level with it. The jerk injured the base of the spine.

One day with the Buckhounds we were hunting a very twisting, slow stag, when, observing a charming countrywoman of mine, I asked her if she had another horse out. As she said she had not, I advised her to go to a certain spot, where the deer-cart held another stag, wait there for me, and we would have a good run, and with luck we could get back to the station and catch a train. Sure enough, we had a splendid run, half an hour as hard as we could go; the stag ran into the lost property office in Slough railway station, and a train bound for London came in at the same moment: a prophecy fulfilled.

I was one of the original number that first played polo at Lillie Bridge, in the early days of polo in England. We played on little 13-hand ponies, with a bamboo root rounded

off as a ball. I do not think that there are many of the original number now (1913) alive; but among them is Lord Valentia, who very kindly sent me the following account of the introduction of polo into England:

"The first polo match ever played in Europe was between the 9th Lancers and 10th Hussars at Hounslow, July, 1871, but the 10th had played polo for years then. The first game ever played was at Aldershot, on Cove Common, in 1870; where Colonel Liddell says in his *Memoirs of the 10th Royal Hussars*: 'The game was introduced into England by the officers of the 10th, from a description of the game as played by the Manipuri tribe in India which appeared in *The Field* newspaper. Lord Valentia, Mr. Hartopp, and Mr. George Cheape of the 11th, attached to the 10th, were the originators.' I believe the Lillie Bridge Club was formed in 1872. I well remember a day at Lillie Bridge when I think you, Bill, and Marcus were playing, and your mother was looking on. Bill was knocked out by a crack on the head, and carried into the dressing-room, where he lay unconscious for a short time. Your mother was in the room with him, and heard Tom Fitzwilliam in the next room shouting out so that everyone in both rooms could hear, 'Oh, it's only Bill knocked out. No matter, you can't kill a Beresford!'"

I had entered to ride my horse Nightwalker in the steeple-chase at Totnes, which is the most difficult course in England, up hill and down dale, and along a narrow path beside and across the river. Just before the race, I was warned that a plan had been formed for the jockeys to ride me out at a post on the river at the bottom of the hill. Had I been ridden out, I could never have recovered the ground. I kept a vigilant look-out accordingly. Riding along the tow-path, a jockey began to hustle me. I told him to pull back, warning him that unless he kept clear I would have him in the river. He returned no answer, but continued to hustle me: whereupon I pulled my horse on to him, cannoned into him, and over he went, horse and all,

into the water. Falling on a rock, he broke his thigh. I won the race. Then I went to look after the injured jockey.

Nightwalker was one of the best horses I ever owned. I sold him to Lord Zetland, who told me that "the horse was one of the best he had ever had, and no price would buy him."

In 1882, while I was in command of the *Condor*, a gymkhana was arranged which had the unfortunate and wholly unforeseen result of bringing me into serious disfavour with an agitated husband. We rode upon side-saddles, dressed in ladies' attire: habits, chignons, and tall hats complete. I had a capital pony, and had won the race, my chignon and hat blowing off on the way, when up comes an indignant gentleman, to accuse me of insulting his wife. I had, he said, dressed up to imitate the lady, on purpose to bring ridicule upon her.

Naturally, I assured him that he was mistaken, and that nothing would have induced me to commit so discourteous an action. But my gentlemen waxed hotter than before, and violently demanded an apology. He declined to accept my assurance; his language was highly irritating; and I became angry in my turn.

"You don't appear to understand the situation," I told him. "How dare you come to me and tell me that I looked like your wife? Either you apologise to me at once for that most improper suggestion, or . . ."

He saw reason. He apologised. The biter was bit.

While I was commanding the *Condor* in 1882, a famous Italian long-distance runner came to Malta, and issued a challenge, of which the conditions were that he would run on foot any mounted man over a twenty-mile course, himself to go any pace he chose, but the horse to trot, canter, or gallop, not to stop or to walk. I accepted the challenge, and went into hard training.

I trained on ponies, confiding the pony which I was to ride in the race to a midshipman of light weight, and reduced my weight to 10 st. 8 lb. The greater proportion of the

Maltese, whose dislike of the English was still strong in those days, were in favour of the Italian. They assembled in vast crowds on the Marsa upon the day of the race. We ran and rode round and round the great open space—afterwards the parade-ground—and although my adversary tried every trick of his trade, such as suddenly stopping, or lying down, I succeeded in winning the race.

I had a famous horse called Sudden Death, which I bought from Lord Norris; and the first time I drove him tandem in the lead was on Portsmouth Hard, where he cut across the first cab on the cab rank, whereupon all the cabs backed out on the top of one another with kickings, cursings, and squealings. I sold Sudden Death for £15, a case of infamous sherry, and a life insurance ticket.

The greatest devil of a horse I ever owned I called The Fiend. He would carry me brilliantly for a day or two, and then, for no earthly reason, he would turn it up in a run, kick, back, rear and bite at my foot; and if he could not get me off, he would rub my leg against a wall or rush at a gate. Once, after carrying me beautifully in two runs on one day, he flew into one of his tantrums. We were crossing the bridge over the Clodagh River at Curraghmore, and he actually jumped upon the parapet of the bridge, balanced himself upon it for a moment, and then (thank God!) jumped into the road again.

We had a pad groom in the Curraghmore stables, Paddy Quin, called The Whisperer, because he could control any dangerous horse by whispering to him. I told Quin to sell The Fiend without bringing my name into the transaction. He sold the horse accordingly; and when the business was completed, he told me that he had represented to the purchaser that The Fiend "belonged to a lone widdy living by the say-side."

I believe that I am the only man who has ever ridden a pig down Park Lane. As I was returning home from a dance in the calm of a summer morning, accompanied by a friend, a herd of swine came by, and among them a

huge animal trotted pre-eminent. I wagered £5 that I would ride that great pig into Piccadilly; dashed into the herd, took a flying leap upon the pig's back, and galloped all down Park Lane, pursued with shouts by the swineherd. As I turned into Piccadilly, the swineherd caught me a clout on the head, knocking me off my steed. But not before I won my wager.

I was once prettily sold by a sportsman named Doddy Johnson. We were of a party at Maidenhead, and we laid £5 on the winner of a swimming race across the Thames, both to swim in our frock coats and tall hats.

My antagonist and I were to start from a line on the lawn at Skindle's, and the first to get ashore on the opposite bank was to be the winner. I raced down the lawn and plunged in. About half-way across the river, I looked back, and there was Doddy standing on the bank. He had his jest; presumably it was worth a fiver.

One year, three out of four horses in my coach being hunters, I was obliged to start with the leaders, for if I started in the proper way with the wheelers, the off wheeler invariably jumped into her collar and kicked. Being taken to task in the Park one day by a famous four-in-hand driver, who told me I did not know how to start a team, I said to him that as he was an authority on the subject, I should be very grateful if he would be so good as to start my coach for me, and thus to show me how it ought to be done; adding that if the coach were damaged or the horses were injured, he must hold himself responsible.

Gladly accepting these conditions, my friend mounted to the box and settled himself with great nicety and pulled off the leaders. Then he touched the off wheeler with his whip. The next moment she had kicked in the boot, and the leaders started kicking, and both fell—a regular tie-up. The mare capped her hocks and was laid up at a vet's for a week.

I was driving a coach up from Sandown Races along a crowded road, when a most unfortunate accident suddenly exposed me to the fury of the populace. Swinging the whip

out in order to catch it up properly, the thong caught under a lady's chignon, and the whip was nearly pulled out of my hand. Chignon and hat came away together and remained dangling. The poor lady must have been sadly hurt. Instantly, of course, I tried to pull up in order to apologise, when the mob rushed to the very unjust conclusion that I had insulted the lady on purpose; there was a deal of shouting, and stones began to fly; the horses were hit and bolted, so that I never had the opportunity of making my apology. The Duke of Portland, Lord Londonderry and Lord Inniskillen were on the coach. We used each of us to horse one coach in stages for the race meetings near London.

Upon another occasion, when I was driving the Prince of Wales on my coach to a meet of the Four-in-Hand Club at the Magazine, Hyde Park, a man who was quite unknown to me shouted,

"'Ullo, Chawley, 'ow are yer? I see you've got 'Wiles' up alongside yer."

"Some of your friends seem very familiar," said the Prince, who took the remark with perfect good-humour.

I once laid a wager that I would drive round Rotten Row, an exercise forbidden by the regulations. A party assembled to watch the event; and while they were looking out for me, a man driving the Park water-cart came by, and turned the water on them. Then the company, looking closer at the driver, perceived that I had won my bet.

The first racehorse owned by the Prince of Wales was a horse named Stonehenge, which I bought for him. We were partners in the horse. Stonehenge had won one or two races, when I went away on leave for a few days. On my return I found that my groom, against orders, had been galloping him, and that one of his legs had filled. Having heard that my uncle, Lord Waterford, once trained a horse which filled his leg, by swimming him in the sea after a boat, I tried the experiment with Stonehenge. The admiral's coxswain, two hands, and myself swam Stonehenge every

day about Plymouth Harbour. The horse got fit to run for his life, and I rode him in a hurdle race at Plymouth. He was winning easily, but, alas! he broke down at the last hurdle, and was just beaten.

In 1883–4, the Duke of Portland and myself, as partners, bought Rosy Morn, as a yearling. He won several races as a two-year-old, and we fancied him for the Derby. He was a better colt as a two-year-old than Lord Hastings' Melton, which won the Derby. Both horses were trained in the same stable, at Matt Dawson's, Heath House, Newmarket.

Matt Dawson declared that we had got a Derby horse. I was getting the boats through the Bab-el-Kebir in the Egyptian war, when I heard that Rosy Morn had gone a roarer; and I thought it a bad omen for the expedition.

Lord Marcus and I organised a donkey race to enliven a South Coast race-meeting. We hired two donkeys apiece, and each bestrode two steeds, standing on their backs, and rode them over the wooden groynes that descend the beach at regular intervals.

The curse of race-meetings is the crowd of dubious characters which infests them. Lord Marcus, travelling by rail to Newmarket, defeated three of such persons single-handed.

A trio of three-card-trick men tried to bully him into venturing on the game; whereupon he set about them. Two he knocked out, and the third piped down. They left that carriage of carnage at the next station, protesting amid blood and tears that it was occupied by the most furious devil allowed on earth. He was maligned: there never was a kinder-hearted man.

Lord Marcus, who is singularly ready with his tongue, upon being asked whether he thought False Tooth a good name for a horse, said:

"The best, because you can't stop him."

The same relative committed a worse crime at the Club, where a very deaf member appealed to him to be told what another member was saying to him.

"He's wishing you a Happy New 'Ear—and God knou you want one!" shouted Markie.

One of the most unexpected events in which I ever too part occurred at Scarborough, where I was staying for th races with Mr. Robert Vyner. In the same hotel we staying two well-known members of the racing world, M Dudley Milner and Mr. Johnny Shafto. Vyner and I ha pened to enter the large and long room, used for assemblie when we perceived Dudley Milner and Johnny Shafto stan ing at the other end, and observed that they were arguin together, somewhat heatedly, in broad Yorkshire. Th were disputing, as racing men do at such times, abou weights in an impending handicap.

There was nothing at all in the great room, so far as remember, except a sideboard and a dish filled with pats butter which stood on the sideboard. I picked up a pat butter on the end of the ash-plant I was carrying, and tol Vyner that if he would come outside, I would throw the p of butter to a surprising distance.

"Why go outside?" said he. "Why not take a shot those two fellows who are arguing so busily over there?"

"And so I will," said I.

The pat of butter described a beautiful yellow parabo at high speed and lighted upon the eye of one of the di putants. The impact doubled him up, and he thought th the other man had hit him. Drawing his right fist back ve slowly and carefully, he struck his friend full on the point the nose. The next moment they were both rolling on th floor, fighting like cats. My companion and I were laughin so much that we couldn't separate them; and they final had to go to bed for a week to recover themselves of the wounds.

Butter produces various effects, according to its applic tion. I was one of the guests among a large party at luncheon, given by an old gentleman who had a fancy f breeding pugs, which were then the fashionable breed dog. On the table opposite to me was a glass bowl co

taining a quantity of pats of butter; and as each of the many pugs in the room came to me, I gave him a pat of butter on the end of a fork. He gently snuggled it down. After about ten minutes first one pug and then another began to be audibly unwell. The old gentleman was so terrified at these alarming symptoms, that he incontinently dispatched a carriage at speed to fetch the nearest vet. That expert, after a careful diagnosis, reported that "someone must have been feeding the pugs on butter."

My brother Marcus, travelling by rail with some friends, Mr. Dudley Milner being of the party, Markie very kindly relieved the tedium of the journey. Dudley Milner had fallen asleep. Marcus took the ticket from Milner's pocket. He then woke up Milner, telling him that the tickets were about to be collected. Milner, after feverishly searching for his ticket, was forced to the conclusion that he had lost it, and, finding that he had very little money, begged that someone would lend him the requisite sum. One and all, with profuse apologies, declared themselves to be almost penniless; and Milner was nearing despair, when my brother sympathetically suggested that, as the train approached the station, Milner should hide under the seat, and all would be well. Thereupon Milner, assisted by several pairs of feet, struggled under the seat, and his friends screened him with their legs.

The collector appeared, and Marcus gave him all the tickets.

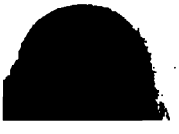
"Here's six tickets for five gentlemen," said the collector.

"Quite correct," said Marcus. "The other gentleman is under the seat. He prefers travelling like that."

An old friend of mine, Lord Suffield, has recently published his memoirs. He was an indomitable rider, with a beautiful seat, and one of the hardest men to hounds in his day. I well remember riding home with him across country after the hunt with His Majesty's Buckhounds, when, taking a turn to the right, while I took a turn to the left, he suddenly disappeared altogether from view. As

suddenly he appeared again on his horse's neck. He speedily got back into the saddle and went away as if nothing had happened, looking neither to the right nor left. I turned to find out the cause of his disappearance, and found that he had come across a deep V-shaped ditch, at the bottom of which was a very high post and rails. How any man or horse could have got over it, it is impossible to say. When I spoke to him about his exploit in the evening, he treated it as a matter of course, and only said it was "a rather nasty place."

When we were in India together, in the suite of the Prince of Wales, he always preferred riding to going on an elephant. He was a great yachtsman in his day, and knew as much about handling yachts as any seaman I have ever met. He was a very good shot, and one of the greatest friends I have ever had.



## CHAPTER LIV

## SPORTING MEMORIES (*Continued*)

### II. SHOOTING

THERE are few kinds of beasts which I have not shot; and among those few are lions and giraffes.

When I was at Vancouver as a midshipman, I went out after deer upon a pouring wet day. I fired at a deer; the gun, a muzzle-loader, missed fire; I set the stock on the ground in order to ram home the charge; and the gun went off. The bullet cut the button off the top of my cap: a narrow escape.

I shall never forget the excitement of three of us midshipmen of the *Clio*, when, being out after tree grouse in the bush, we put up a big spotted deer. It was close to us, and we killed it; we cut it up, and tramped the miles back to the ship, laden with the haunches, shoulders and head. Arriving on board with our clothes soaked with blood, we were hailed as splendid sportsmen, and for days thereafter the gun-room feasted upon venison.

When the *Clio* was off Juan Fernandez in February, 1865, we sent a party of seamen across to the island to beat up the wild goats towards the shore. The cliffs are steep-to, and along the face of them winds a narrow path worn by the goats themselves. The pathway itself is inclined at a steep angle. I took the cutter and hung off and on, waiting for the goats. Presently they came down, about thirty of them, in single file, slipping a good deal, but recovering their footing with marvellous agility. We fired

at the line and knocked over three. They fell on the rocks below. There was so much seaway that we were unable to get the boat in. I therefore took a line and swam to shore, collected the goats, toggled their legs together, secured them with the line, and they were pulled off to the boat. But when I tried to swim off, the sea was so rough that the breakers beat me back. I was hurled against the rocks; all the wind was knocked out of me, and I was much bruised and cut. A bluejacket swam off with a line, and although he did not toggle my legs, he and I were hauled off to the boats, like the goats. We brought all three goats safely on board. One of them was a billy-goat, the other two nanny-goats, in which there was no sign of any bullet, so that they must have been carried down with the billy-goat.

While I was serving in the *Sutlej* as sub-lieutenant, the chief engineer, James Roffey, who was a splendid shot, and myself, went upon hunting expeditions in Vancouver. We took two horses and a couple of dogs. At night we slept on waterproof sheets under a lean-to shelter made of branches. We shot many partridge—as these birds are called. Having treed them, we shot the lower birds first, and so on to the top. The report of the guns did not disturb them, but if a bird fell from the upper branches, the rest would take flight. I have shot these birds in the same way, during recent visits to Canada.

During the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to India in 1870, I accompanied his Royal Highness upon the great elephant hunt in Ceylon. For months beforehand the wild elephants had been gradually driven towards the kraal by an army of native beaters. The kraal is constructed of huge trunks of trees, lashed together and buttressed, making a strong stockade. In plan, covering about eight acres, it is shaped like a square bottle, the neck representing a narrow entrance, from which the stockade on either side runs at a wide angle, like jaws. The elephants are driven down the narrowing jaws and through the entrance, which

is closed behind them with a gate made of logs. Once inside the kraal, the wild animals are tackled by the tame elephants ridden by mahouts, and are secured with hide ropes to the trees of the stockade, which is formed of stout timber for the purpose.

Upon the occasion of the Duke's visit, I was in the arena, mounted upon a tame elephant amid a wild heaving mob of animals. One huge beast defeated the tame elephants, throwing the whole lot into confusion. He suddenly charged, knocking over the tame elephant next to me, the mahout breaking his leg in the fall. Things were looking very ugly, when someone—against orders—fired and killed the rebel elephant, the bullet entering his temple.

If the day of the great elephant hunt in India, arranged in honour of the Prince of Wales, was the hardest run of my life, hanging on to the back of a swift pad elephant which went through the jungle for fourteen hours like a runaway locomotive, the hardest day I ever had on foot was in Ceylon, during the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to that superb country, in 1870. I have found Irishmen in most places under the sun; and I found one in Ceylon. His name was Varian, and he was a famous hunter of elephants. Rogue elephants were his favourite game; he stalked them on foot; walked up to his quarry and shot it. He was, I think, eventually killed by a rogue elephant. His gun, which had belonged to Sir Samuel Baker, was a curiosity among hand-cannon. This formidable engine was so heavy that it was as much as a powerful man could do to heave it up to his shoulder. The recoil—but I will relate what kind of recoil it exercised. The gun was a single-bore muzzle-loader, having two grooves cut within the barrel, into which was fitted a spherical belted bullet.

We started at three o'clock in the morning, taking with us two native bearers to carry the guns. The bearers were little men, fragile to all appearance as pipe-stems, and save for a loin-cloth, naked as they were born. For seven hours we travelled ere we found fresh spoor, following the elephant

trails, paths which the huge animals had cloven through the dense jungle. The heat was intense, the walking an extraordinary exertion; for at every few yards the soft ground was trodden by the elephants into pools of water three or four feet deep, through which we must plunge.

It was blazing noon when we struck fresh tracks; and Varian halted to load the heavy rifle. I contemplated the operation with amazement. He poured the powder into his hand, and tilted three or four handfuls down the muzzle. Then he wrapped a piece of waste round the projectile, and hammered the ramrod home with a hammer. It occurred to me that if ever a gun ought to burst in this world, that gun ought to burst.

We tracked the elephant out of the jungle; and there he was in the open *maidan*, placidly pulling up great tufts of grass with his trunk, and swishing himself with them.

"We must bend down," says Varian in a whisper, "and he may take us for pigs."

He held me by the arm; and bending down, we advanced directly upon the elephant, Varian's bearer loaded to the earth with the great gun.

"If he puts his ears forward and drops his trunk—fire! For he'll either charge or run away," whispered Varian.

And with the graceful courtesy of his race, he handed me the miniature cannon.

We were within twelve yards or so of the huge beast, when his ears jutted forward, and with his trunk he flicked the ground, producing a hollow sound. I braced a leg backwards, and with a strong effort, hove the gun to my shoulder, aimed at the wrinkles just above the trunk, and fired. The elephant and I toppled over at the same moment. I thought my shoulder was broken to pieces; but as I staggered to my feet, I saw the elephant lying over on its side, its legs feebly waving. Varian ran up to it and fired several more shots into its head, and it lay motionless.

In 1874, I was appointed to the *Bellerophon*, temporarily.

She had sunk a steamer which had crossed her bows, and her senior officers had been ordered home to attend the inquiry into the matter. When I joined her, my old messmate in the *Marlborough*, Swinton C. Holland (now admiral), was in sole command; although he was only second lieutenant of the ship; a curious illustration of the incidents of naval life.

Another example of the anomalies of those days was my own position: I was on full pay and on active service, and I was also a member of Parliament. The dual capacity was not in itself conducive to discipline, because it gave naval officers on full pay the opportunity of criticising, as members of Parliament, their superior officers. I do not think it was abused; in my own case, I think the solitary advantage I took was to obtain a pump, which was a sanitary necessity, for the *Thunderer*, when I was her commander: a threat of publicity moving the Admiralty to action which previous applications had failed to produce. In the old days, the Sea Lords used to serve in the dual capacity of members of the Board of Admiralty and of Parliament.

As no one had any precise idea where the *Bellerophon* was, I took passage to Halifax and stayed in the receiving hulk *Pyramus*, fifth-rate, stationed at Halifax, in the hope that the *Bellerophon* would come north. In the meantime, I went for a shooting expedition with a trapper. We went up into the forests of Nova Scotia, camping out, and living upon what we could secure with our guns. We shot bear and deer and prairie chicken. In the depth of the forest I found an Irishman dwelling in a clearing with his wife and family. He was a bitter Orangeman, who (so he told me) had been expatriated for shooting at a priest.

"I had a gun," said he, "but it was a rotten gun. I drew a bead on the priest, and, God forgive me, the gun missed fire!"

I remember saying to him:

"Why the devil can't you leave another man's religious convictions alone? He has as much right to his convictions as you have to yours. If there were no religious wrangles

in our country, it would be the happiest country in the world."

His nearest neighbour, dwelling 20 miles away, was a Roman Catholic; and although my friend cursed him for a Papist, their relations with each other were quite friendly. The Irishman told me how he had once fought to save the life of his child from a bear. He was working in the clearing; near by, his little girl was sitting on the trunk of a felled tree; when a bear suddenly emerged from the forest, and made towards her. The man had for his only weapon a huge handspike, as big as a paviour's rammer. He showed me the thing; it was so heavy that I could scarcely realise that he could have used it as he did use it. But with this formidable club he fought the bear for an hour. Several times he beat the animal to the earth; but the beast returned to the attack; and the man thought his strength must surely fail him. At last, both man and beast were so exhausted that they stood and looked at each other with their tongues hanging out. Then, with a growl, the bear turned tail and rolled back into the forest. The Irishman never saw it again; and he cherished the belief that the brute died of its wounds.

Shooting black buck in the plains of Central India, with the Duke of Portland's party, in 1883, I had been out in a bullock-cart for hours. The method is to describe a wide circle round the black buck, and slowly driving round and round, gradually to diminish the circle. The sun was very hot; I was very tired of the business; and I determined to risk a shot. As I emerged from the cart into the open, a herd of black buck galloped past in the distance in single file, passing behind two tufts of high grass. Sighting between the tufts, I fired right and left, and heard the bullets strike. The *shikari* would not believe that I had hit anything at that range. But there were the bodies of two black buck; the distance from where I had fired to one of them was 220 yards, and to the other, 240 yards. The heads are in my collection of sporting trophies.

I had been twice round the world before I ever saw a really wild man. At last I met one when I was shooting grouse on my own property in Cavan. His voice was a squeaky, husky whisper, like the creaking of an old wooden frigate in a gale of wind. If I hit a bird hard and it passed on, the wild man would say:

"Well, that fellow got a terrible rap anyway!"

If I killed the bird, he would say, "Well well, he has the fatal stroke, with the help of God!"

And if I missed a bird, he would say, "Never moind, Lord Char-less! Ye made him quit that, annyhow."

The incident of the Glenquoich stag occurred many years ago, when I was staying at Glenquoich with the Duke of Marlborough. We had had a hard day, without sighting a warrantable stag, when the stalker spied, far on the skyline of the opposite hill, the grandest head he had ever seen. We stalked up to him until we came to the edge of a valley. There was the noble head scarce fifty yards away. We could see the stag's ears moving. But he did not rise. We lay on that hill-top for an hour and a half; the midges were eating me in platoons; and still the stag did not get up. I could stand it no longer; and I said to the stalker:

"Either you must get him up or I must shoot him through the heather."

The stalker begged me not to shoot; he whistled; then turned upon me a face of utter bewilderment, for the stag lay where he was, moving his ears to keep off the midges. The stalker whistled again. Still the stag lay quiet; and the man looked at me with a countenance of such amazement that I can see it before me as I write. It must have struck him that here was the supernatural; for never in his life had he seen a live stag which would stay to hearken to his whistling.

Then the stalker shouted; then he stood upright and shouted again; and still the stag lay where he was; and the man stared at me in silence with consternation in his eyes.

I delayed no longer. I shot the stag through the heather, and he leaped up, and fell dead.

We found that the poor beast had a hind fetlock cut nearly through by a bullet. The wound must have been inflicted some considerable time previously, for it had mortified and the haunch had withered. Thus wounded, he must have strayed from another forest, for he was a German stag, marked with slits on both his ears; and there were no such stags in Glenquoich forest.

The late Kiamil Pasha, Governor of Salonika, was an old friend of mine. I first knew him when I was in command of the *Undaunted*, in which ship he lunched with me several times. He was a grand specimen of a fine old Turkish gentleman, one of the best among Turkish statesmen, intensely interested in the welfare of his country. I often went out snipe-shooting with the Turkish commander-in-chief round about Salonika. On these occasions, the Pasha invariably wore full uniform; and when we arrived at the shooting ground, we were always met by a squadron of cavalry. I imagined that the guard was furnished as a compliment to myself; and eventually I said to the Pasha that while it was very good of him to pay me the courtesy of a guard, I should be quite as happy if we went out shooting without it.

He replied that the guard was not intended as a compliment, but was ordered for my safety.

"What is the danger?"

"Brigands," said the Pasha.

"But there are no brigands here now."

"Are there not?" said the Pasha. "I killed fourteen yesterday."

And afterwards he showed me where he had rounded them up.

I have seen two whales killed. I saw a whale killed in the Pacific by an old sailing whaler. She sent four boats out, and they hunted the whale, after it was harpooned, for eight hours before they killed it. A boat rowed close to

the whale, the harpooner flung his harpoon, the whale sounded, his tail swung up like a flail and struck the water with a report like the report of a gun, and out flew the line from the boat. The man who eventually killed the whale was armed with a long flexible knife, which he plunged into the whale behind the fin. The vast carcase was towed alongside the ship, than which it was longer; men wearing spiked boots and using sharp spades went upon the whale; and as they sliced into the blubber, making cuts across the carcase, the piece called the "blanket piece" was hoisted inboard by means of a tackle, the whale thus turning gradually over until its whole circumference was stripped.

Many years afterwards, I saw a whale killed off Norway by a modern steam whaler. She steamed slowly after a school of whales, and fired a gun whose projectile was a shell attached to a harpoon. The shell burst inside the whale, killing it. The carcase was then towed alongside the steamer by boats, the operation taking about an hour and a half, and was then towed by the steamer to the whaleries. The whaling master told me that 850 whales had been killed off Norway during that year; and that among them was a whale with an American harpoon in it; wherefore he supposed that the whale must have voyaged round the Horn, or else north about beneath the ice.

## CHAPTER LV

## SPORTING MEMORIES (*Continued*)

### III. Fishing

WHEN, as a youngster, I was sea-fishing at Ascens my boat made fast to a buoy, I had used all bait without getting a fish, when a booby gull kin came and sat on the buoy. I knocked him over with oar, used his remains for bait, and caught lots of fish.

In nearly every ship in which I have served, I had trammel, a trawl and a trot. As a midshipman, I used th myself; when I became a senior officer, I lent them to midshipmen.

Upon visiting the island of Juan Fernandez, while I v a midshipman in the *Clio*, we found three men living in home of Robinson Crusoe. They subsisted chiefly up crayfish. We used to fish for these crustacea, using for b a piece of a Marine's scarlet tunic. The fish used to ta the crayfish while we were hauling them up. In a few ho we caught enough to feed the whole ship's company.

Off the Horn, and in the South Pacific, I have kil many albatross in calm weather, or when the ship was p ceeding very slowly under sail. I made a hook out several hooks like a paternoster. If the bird touched t bait, he was always caught. The upper mandible of t albatross has a curve like the beak of a parrot, and th curve is all there is to hold the hook. When the bird being hauled on board, the lower mandible catches the wa and drives him underneath. When he comes on board he

full of water, and is immediately very sick. Both the first and second pinion bones make beautiful pipe stems about fourteen inches long. I brought many home for my friends. The feet, dried, cleaned and manufactured into bags, make excellent tobacco pouches.

Many a shark have I caught in the old days. I have had two sharks on my hook at once. One had taken the hook, which, barb and all, had pierced right through his jaw; and another shark went for it and got the end of the hook into his mouth. They were both on the hook for some little time, and eventually I killed the first one hooked. I made a walking-stick out of his backbone.

The biggest shark I ever killed measured 12 feet 2 inches long.

I bought my shark hook from a man in an American whaling schooner at the Sandwich Islands. I filed a little notch on the shaft of my hook whenever I killed a shark. To my great annoyance, someone stole my hook in after years.

I was once towing a cod-line astern for dolphin, when a shark took the bait. I took the line round a cleat and played him, or he would have carried it away; got him close enough to get a bowline over his tail, and hauled him on board. This method is generally used for getting a shark on board. Until his tail is cut off with an axe, a shark plays ballyhooly with all around him. A shark's heart is so muscular, and expands and contracts so violently after death that it is impossible to hold it in the hand. Sharks are bad eating, but in those salt-horse days we relished them.

My record in salmon fishing was made in Norway, when together with Lord Wolseley, Mr. Bayard, and Mr. Abram Hewett, I was a guest on board the yacht of my friend, Mr. Fred Wynn. In one night's fly-fishing, I killed forty-one fish. I gave eight of them to the fishermen who worked the canoe for me, and brought thirty-three back to the yacht.

Tarpon fishing is the acme of sea-fishing. Whereas a

salmon is killed by a rod and delicate handling, a tarpon is killed by the line and herculean strength. The rod used is short and thick. The line is made of cotton, thinner and lighter than a salmon line, but extraordinarily strong. It is from 300 to 400 yards long, with four brakes, two on the reel, and two of thick leather placed on the thumbs. When the tarpon is struck, he invariably jumps into the air from six to ten feet, and shakes his head to shake the hook out, an effort in which he often succeeds. He has no teeth, but the upper part of his mouth is as hard as a cow's hoof, and it takes a tremendous strike to get a hook into it past the barb. The biggest tarpon I killed was 186 lb. I think Lord Desborough holds the record with a tarpon of 240 lb., 7 feet 6 inches long, 42 inches girth. Lord Desborough killed 100 tarpon in ten days.

Some years ago, I was most kindly invited by my old friend, Colonel Robert M. Thompson, to stay with him in his houseboat *Everglades* on the coast of Florida. The houseboat was driven by a motor and drew one foot of water. When it came on to blow, Colonel Thompson used to run her up on the beach.

But upon one occasion, we went upon an adventurous voyage, right out into the Atlantic, making a point from Florida to the north; the wind freshened; and the houseboat had all the weather she cared for. Colonel Thompson tells me that while securing loose gear and generally battening down, I remarked that probably no British admiral had ever before found himself in a houseboat drawing one foot of water 50 miles out on the Atlantic in a seaway.

I never had such wonderful sport as I had with Colonel Thompson in the *Everglades*. We killed tons of fish, all with the rod. One night, with a small tarpon rod I killed seven sergeant fish, average 28 lb. This fish takes two long runs, and then turns up on his back, dead. Upon another night I had on an enormous tarpon; the boatman declared it to be the biggest he had ever seen (it always is when one fails to land it). I had just got into the shore after over an

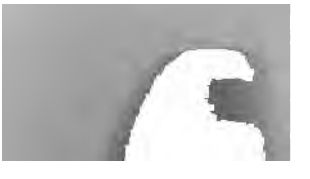
hour's work at the tarpon, when it went off again slowly, with the appearance of a fish, but the methods of a steam roller.

The boatman said:

"Try to check it from going into that current; it is full of sharks."

But the tarpon steadily proceeded. On getting into the current, it suddenly took a run and jumped into the air. When it was half out of the water, a shark's head appeared and bit it in two. I hauled only the head and shoulders home. The shark was so large that we tried to catch him next day, and hooked either him or another. He was so heavy that we could make nothing of him. He took us where he liked, but never left the current. So we bent a line on to the one by which we held him, took it to the capstan of a yacht lying near by, hove him up to the side, and shot him with a rifle. He was then triced up by the tail by a tackle from the mast. He was a hammer-headed shark over 18 feet long.

He disgorged soap, bottles, sardine-tins, Armour meat-tins, a number of large crab shells, some small turtle shells, pieces of fish, and the midship section of a large tarpon, which was supposed to have been the piece bitten out of my failure of the previous night.



## CHAPTER LVI

## HOME WATERS: THE LAST COMMAND

BEFORE taking over the command of the Channel Fleet, to which I was appointed on 4th March, 1907, on my return from the Mediterranean, I proceeded on leave, family affairs calling me to Mexico.

My younger brother, Lord Delaval, had been killed in a railway accident in the United States, on 26th December of the preceding year (1906), while I was in the Mediterranean. He left a large property in Mexico, whither I went to settle his affairs as his executor.

Lord Delaval had gone to Mexico as a young man, intending to make his fortune, and so to fulfil the terms imposed by the parents of the lady to whom he was attached, as the condition upon which they would grant their sanction to his marriage with their daughter. At the time of his death, having bought out his partner, he possessed two magnificent ranches in Mexico: Ojitos Ranch, 120,000 acres, and Upper Chug Ranch, 76,000 acres; and a third ranch at Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada. I stayed for some time at Ojitos Ranch; where I found that my brother was known as a dare-devil rider and an excellent rancher; managing his ranches himself, and taking his part in rounding up his stock and branding his cattle.

Upon Ojitos there were about 6000 head of cattle and 1500 head of horses, donkeys and mules. Ojitos means "little springs"; the house stood beside the springs; and my brother, who was something of an engineer, had constructed three large reservoirs and nine miles of irrigation

canals, intersecting the whole estate. These little canals, fed by the reservoirs, were two feet broad and three inches deep, so that they could be kept clear with the plough. As the water was perpetually running along them, the stock could drink anywhere, an invaluable advantage in the calving season. Upon some ranches, where the water is scarce, cows and calves often perish for lack of ready access to it. The vast grassy plain is surrounded by mountains, and the estate itself is enclosed in a ring fence of barbed wire, 110 miles in circumference. My brother's staff consisted of five Mexican cowboys and three negroes. He left the two Mexican ranches to my brother Marcus and myself.

I got rid of all off-colour stock; put on a lot of new Durham bulls; poisoned the prairie dogs which ate the grass, leaving the ground bare as a high road; effected various other improvements, and organised the whole upon a business plan, down to the last detail. The drought of 1909 killed off many of the stock, for although the water supply was maintained, the grass perished. Nevertheless, the Ojitos Ranch paid its way, and in 1912 it was sold for a good price. The other ranch, Upper Chug, is still unsold at the time of writing (1913), owing to the breaking out of the rebellion, the supersession of President Diaz, and the consequent unsettled state of the country.

It was not remarkable for peace during my sojourn at Ojitos. El Paso, the frontier town, was full of what are called "the Bad Men of the United States," who were wanted by the police; and who, if they were in danger of capture, slipped over the border. The revolver is commonly used in disputes, particularly at Casas Grandes, a Mexican town about 120 miles from El Paso. During my brief visit to that place, three men were shot: one in a gambling hell, one in a Chinese restaurant, and one in a lodging-house; their assailants escaping with impunity.

Riding on the ranch, I saw a man about two miles away galloping for dear life. The cowboy who was with me explained that the rider "had holed a man somewhere and

was off up country." The fugitive headed away from us, and coming to the wire fence, he nipped the wire, and so rode away to the hills.

The retainers of Ojitos Ranch, with whom I sat down to dinner every day, were each armed with a revolver, sometimes two revolvers, and a knife. I was the only unarmed man present.

I had already made the acquaintance of President Diaz some time previously, when I had been tarpon-fishing at Tampico. On that occasion I was accompanied by my friend, Mr. Benjamin Guinness, who had been sub-lieutenant in the *Undaunted* when I commanded that ship. His brother had been midshipman in the *Undaunted* at the same time. The two brothers left the Service to engage in business, and both have been highly successful.

Upon my departure from Ojitos, I went to see President Diaz. He was most kind and helpful; both he and other prominent Mexicans informed me that they desired to increase the number of British properties in Mexico; and the President expressed the hope that I would retain possession of the ranches. At the same time, he gave me all the assistance in his power with regard to the settlement of the affairs of the estates; nor could they have been settled satisfactorily without his help.

President Diaz impressed me as a quiet, strong and determined ruler, who knew exactly how to govern Mexico, and did it. Under his rule, revolutions were summarily checked, and Mexico flourished as never before.

Upon my return to England, I took over the command of the Channel Fleet, hoisting my flag in the *King Edward VII*, at Portland, on 16th April, 1907. The second in command was Vice-Admiral Sir Reginald Custance (now Admiral Sir R. N. Custance, G.C.B., K.C.M.G., C.V.O.), a most distinguished strategist and tactician, one of the most learned officers in his profession. I have never been able to understand why Sir Reginald Custance, instead of being placed

H.M.S. "KING EDWARD VII" ENGAGED IN BATTLE PRACTICE, 1907

by about one-quarter, and a new Home Fleet was formed of nucleus crew ships. The Channel Fleet was reduced from sixty-two fighting vessels to twenty-one fighting vessels, the balance being transferred to the Home Fleet. An order was issued under which ships taken from the Channel, Atlantic and Mediterranean Fleets for purposes of refitting, were to be replaced during their absence by ships from the Home Fleet.

In December, the Nore Division of the Home Fleet was given full crews instead of nucleus crews.

In April, 1907, an order was issued that no more than two battleships in each Fleet were to be refitted at one time.

In September, the Channel Fleet was increased from twenty-one vessels to sixty vessels.

In August, 1908, the orders substituting Home Fleet ships for ships from sea-going fleets under repair, and ordaining that no more than two battleships should be absent at one time, were cancelled; with the result that the Channel Fleet went to sea in the following December short of eight battleships, two armoured cruisers, one unarmoured cruiser, one scout, and 20 destroyers, 32 vessels in all.

When the Home Fleet was finally constituted, in March, 1907, there were no less than three commanders-in-chief in Home Waters; one commanding the Home Fleet, one the Nore Division, and one (myself) the Channel Fleet. In time of war the supreme command was to be exercised by me, over the whole number of fighting vessels, 244 in all. But in time of peace they could not be trained or exercised together, nor had any one of the commanders-in-chief accurate information at any given moment of the state or disposition of the forces of any other commander-in-chief.

Such, briefly presented, was the situation with which I was confronted in this my last command. It was fraught with difficulties so complex, and potential dangers to the security of the country so palpable, that many of my friends urged me to resign my command in the public interest. I decided, however, that I should best serve His Majesty the King, the Navy and the country by remaining at my post.

In the summer of 1907, the Channel Fleet proceeded upon a United Kingdom cruise, touching at various places round the coasts of these islands. When the Fleet was at sea, individual ships were sent away upon short cruises, in order to give the captains opportunities of exercising independent command. When the Fleet was at anchor, the ships were open to the public from half-past one to half-past six daily, in order to increase their knowledge and encourage their interest in the Royal Navy.

It was during one of these cruises that the Irishmen in the Fleet displayed one of their national characteristics.

The anniversary of Saint Patrick's Day was drawing near when the Fleet lay in Bantry Bay. On Saint Patrick's Day itself the Fleet was to proceed to sea. Hitherto, as a rule, if the Irishmen in the Fleet happened to be on leave on Saint Patrick's Day, many of them broke their leave. When I made a signal, giving the Irishmen four days' leave, and ordering them to return on board on Saint Patrick's Day, I added that the commander-in-chief, himself an Irishman, expected every Irishman to be back to his leave. There were 766 Irish liberty-men went on shore for four days; and 766 were on board again ere the Fleet sailed on the night of Saint Patrick's Day. It might be that the Saint could mention the thing in conversation with Saint Peter at the Gate, for future reference. For there were some 2000 Irishmen in the Fleet, who, when the Fleet lay at Portland, could not, like the Englishmen, visit their homes once a month. And when it is considered how hospitable and convivial they become on the anniversary of their patron Saint, I shall be understood when I say that the behaviour on this occasion of the Irishmen in the Fleet affords a remarkable instance of the Irish sense of honour. There are no other people so easily handled, if the right way be taken with them.

The Fleet assembled at Spithead in November, 1907, to receive his Majesty the Emperor of Germany; and in the following May, the Fleet assembled at Dover to receive President Fallières.

In the summer of 1908, the Fleet proceeded upon a cruise in Norwegian waters. Their Majesties the King and Queen of Norway, with the little Crown Prince Olaf, honoured the flagship with a visit when the Fleet lay at Esbjerg. At Skagen, on the evening of 7th July, when the Fleet was lying at anchor, the *Hohenzollern*, flying the flag of his Majesty the Emperor of Germany, was suddenly sighted, together with the escorting cruiser *Stettin* and the destroyer *Sleipner*. By the time his Imperial Majesty had reached the lines, the ships were manned and dressed over all. A salute of twenty-one guns was fired; and the *Hohenzollern* was cheered as she steamed down the lines.

During my absence in Norwegian waters, I was the subject of a violent attack in the Press and elsewhere, due to a misapprehension. I recall the circumstance, because I am proud to remember that it was an Irishman, and he a political opponent, who, alone among all the members of the House of Commons, stood up and protested against an attack being made upon a brother Irishman when he was absent and unable to reply.

Their Majesties King Edward and Queen Alexandra visited the Channel Fleet on 7th August, 1908, in the *Victoria and Albert*, accompanied by the Prince of Wales in the *Alexandra*. His Majesty honoured the *King Edward VII* and the *Hibernia*, second flag, with a visit. The flag-officers of the Fleet had the honour of lunching with their Majesties on board the *Victoria and Albert*.

Upon one of the Fleet cruises in the north, the flagship was passing under the Forth Bridge, when a spar caught on a girder of the bridge and carried away. Ere it could fall, Flag-Lieutenant Gibbs, with his customary presence of mind and pluck, threw me upon the deck, and himself on the top of me, to save me from the falling spar. Luckily, it touched neither of us.

There being no provision against mines dropped in time of war, it was suggested by me that the North Sea trawlers should be enlisted to sweep for mines; because they were

accustomed to the difficult work of towing and handling a trawl. The proposal was afterwards adopted.

In March, 1909, the Admiralty, in addition to other changes, having suddenly reduced the length of ships' commissions from three years to two years, I was ordered to haul down my flag and come on shore.

Accordingly, my flag was hauled down at Portsmouth on Wednesday, 24th March, 1909, after fifty years' service.

I cannot close this chronicle without expressing my profound appreciation of the loyalty and affection shown to me by my brother officers and by the men of the Royal Navy. Few events in my life have touched me more deeply than the presence of so many of my old shipmates among the crowds which assembled upon Portsmouth Hard when I came on shore after hauling down my flag, and which filled Waterloo Station and its approaches when I arrived in London. Nor can I omit to record my sense of the kind and generous reception given to me by my brother officers, who attended, in numbers that constituted a record, the dinner, over which I presided, given by the Royal Navy Club of 1765 and 1785, on the anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar next ensuing after my coming on shore.

It was a satisfaction to me when I came on shore, and it is a satisfaction to me now, to think that I pulled my pound in the Navy.

Doubtless, like other men of action, I have made mistakes. But I may justly claim that I have always held one purpose with a single mind: to do my best for the good of the Service and for the welfare of the officers and men of the Royal Navy; and in following that purpose, I have tried to disregard consequences which might affect my own fortunes, and which, in fact, have often proved injurious to them. And to the purpose which I have followed since I was a boy, I shall devote the rest of my life.

## POSTSCRIPT

## THE MAKING OF AN ADMIRAL

ONE of our greatest naval administrators, the late Admiral of the Fleet Sir Frederick Richards, was constantly preoccupied with a problem, of which he used often to speak. "How are we to make great admirals?" he would say. It is a question of the highest moment. A great admiral may be born, but he must also be made. The making of an admiral has been the study of the best minds in the Navy for generations. And for this reason: *In time of war, all must depend on one man, and that man the admiral in command.* Upon his knowledge, ability and resolution will rest the fate of the country and of the Empire. That simple fact is not generally realised by the public. They do not understand that in time of war the statesman, the diplomatist, the politician must all give place to one man, the admiral in command at sea.

Every decade of naval officers has added something to the knowledge of what must go to the making of a great sea-officer. The establishment of the War College, the institution of the War Staff at the Admiralty, the private studies of individual naval officers, the practice of holding manœuvres: all these things are valuable endeavours toward the same end. It remains, however (I believe), the fact that there exists no treatise on the ordinary administrative duties to be fulfilled by an admiral.

During many years I had the habit of making notes concerning all matters connected with the administration of a Fleet. These notes I hope to arrange and to publish. In

the meantime, I have ventured to think that the contribution of some observations dealing with the administrative duties of an admiral in command, embodying the results of many years' experience at sea, might be of use.

There is no position in the world requiring more tact than that of a commander-in-chief of a large Fleet. It is only by the exercise of consummate tact that a Fleet can be maintained in the most rigid state of discipline and, at the same time, cheery, happy and smart. Therefore it is that a knowledge of human nature is essential to the admiral.

Two admirals may do the same thing or may give the same order; one is perfectly successful, the other is not. One knows HOW to give an order, the other does not.

Success depends not only on *what* is done, but on *the way in which* it is done. Cheerful obedience to an order depends, not on the order but, on the way the order is given. In handling men, much depends on what is said, but much more depends upon the way in which it is said.

The art of successful administration of men consists in the prevention of accident, misdemeanour, or regrettable incidents. It does not consist in putting things right *after* the unpleasant event has occurred. Nearly all slackness and untoward incidents are preventable by the exercise of forethought, common sense and good organisation. Most of the matters that go wrong, causing irritation and fault-finding on the part of the admiral, are often due to the failure to look ahead of the admiral himself.

When a Fleet proceeds to sea, the cruisers are often to be observed sobbing and sighing at full speed, trying to get into the position ordered, after the Fleet has left the harbour, when, by the use of a little judgment, they might have been sent out previously, and so have got on the correct line of bearing at slow speed, without any trouble.

The usual method in life is to let a mistake occur, and then to put it right afterwards. It is upon this point that the world forms most unfair opinions. The man who *keeps*

things right seldom gets any credit. It is the man who *puts* things right who gets it. The history of war affords many examples of this tendency.

A commander-in-chief who, by his organisation and by his appreciation of facts and positions, wins an action with small loss, often gets little credit. On the other hand, an officer who makes some blunder by which he loses a number of officers and men, but who eventually wins his action, is made a popular hero. In other words, the man with the blind pluck of a bulldog gets more credit than the man who, by his strategy and tactical ability, wins a more or less bloodless victory.

An admiral should remember that in peace or war he can satisfactorily administer his Fleet only through the loyalty and zeal of his captains. Frequent personal interviews promote confidence; and such confidence must be of benefit to the admiral. He need not take his captains' views, but he will gain a great deal of useful information from officers who are just as keen to make the Fleet as perfect as possible as he is himself.

Admirals should not publicly identify themselves with their own flagships in the same way as a captain may identify himself with his ship. To the admiral ALL ships should be the same, and private ships should feel that the admiral takes quite as much interest in their well-being and their whole life as he does in his own flagship. The admiral should therefore avoid, even in private conversation, speaking of "my commander," "our launch," etc. etc. A flagship, her officers and men, have many advantages. In return for these privileges, a flagship should make every effort to be a pattern of smartness and efficiency; and the admiral must be constantly on the alert lest he show partiality or favour to his flagship. Nothing makes more jealousy in a Fleet than a belief that the flagship is favoured at the expense of the rest of the Fleet, either in routine duty or in any other respect.

Flagships must have many privileges, but they should not be increased. For instance, her boats should take pre-

cedence in drawing beef or stores; but in all matters connected with competitive drills, carrying out station orders, etc. etc., all ships must be equal in the admiral's eye and mind.

An admiral should continually go on board the ships of the Fleet, talk to the captains, and obtain their ideas and recommendations on various subjects.

The best plan is to notify a ship a day or two beforehand that the commander-in-chief is coming on board on Sunday at the time most convenient to the captain; and to follow the captain's usual routine for Sunday inspection. This method gives the captain an opportunity of bringing to the admiral's notice any officer or man who has in any way distinguished himself. It strengthens the captain's hands, and has a good effect upon the Fleet. It lets the men see their admiral; while the admiral can remark the state of the ship and run all his Fleet up to the smartest ship.

It is wiser to administer a Fleet by *commendation* than by *condemnation*. If commendation is given for good and smart actions, condemnation for bad, slackness becomes far more severely condemned, and no sympathy for it is aroused.

Any smart action performed by an officer or man should be appreciated publicly by signal. This is complimentary to the officer or man and to the ship in which he is serving at the time. Every one is grateful for appreciation.

The old style in the Navy was never to commend anything that was well done; to do well was considered to be no more than a man's duty. On the other hand, anything that was badly done led to severe reprimands.

When a good officer or man knows that the admiral appreciates his work, it cheers the Fleet and raises its whole tone. It is right to be severe on those who do their work lazily or badly; but it is quite as necessary to appreciate those who do their work well.

An admiral should continually inspect some of the various departments of the ships under his command. By personal observation he is certain to find out something

which would not come to his notice in any other way, and he may therefore prevent things from going wrong in their initial stages.

The admiral should invariably inspect anything that may have gone wrong in any of the ships under his command, owing to accident, carelessness, or misadventure: such as a derrick, cable, or capstan carrying away, or any defect in the engine or boiler rooms. He should then talk over the method of repair with the captain and the departmental officers. This procedure often saves time and trouble, as the admiral gives directions for the accident to be repaired in the way he desires from the first, thereby obviating the necessity of altering the plans afterwards. It also encourages those who are going to execute the work.

The admiral should let the captains know that they can come on board the flagship and consult him at any time they like, day or night, and that he will always be glad to see them.

Captains should always come to see, or write to, the admiral on any matter which they wish to be settled, no matter how trivial it may appear. They should not go to the secretary; for, if they do, it puts the secretary in a false position, and may cause mistakes and wrong conceptions.

Captains may go to the chief of the staff upon minor questions; but it is, as a rule, better for them to go straight to the admiral.

The consideration of captains, expressed by the words, "I don't think I will bother the admiral about this question," is understood, but should be regarded as mistaken. *It is the admiral's business to be bothered.*

The admiral should be considerate and courteous to all those under his command, remembering that there are two sides to every question.

When the admiral personally inquires into any case, with the object of fixing responsibility upon an individual, he should be suave in his manner, even if condemnation is

given. He should endeavour to send a man away wearing a smile rather than a scowl.

The admiral should remember this maxim particularly when he feels irritated at seeing something done which appears careless, or opposed to the orders laid down. He should always maintain an unruffled demeanour, and be perfectly calm and collected under all circumstances. To fail in this respect is to confuse both himself and those under his command: a condition which cannot add to that smartness and coolness so necessary when a difficulty or an accident occurs in the Fleet.

The management of a ship or a Fleet is full of irritation and worries. These can only be decreased by officers remaining calm and collected.

All men are liable to make mistakes. The best men often make the most glaring mistakes. A smart man acting under a mistake will move his ship to starboard or to port quicker than a slow man, and his mistake will therefore appear the greater.

An admiral should never make a signal to one of the captains (unless he happens to have a very bad and slack captain), implying that the captain could have done much better than he did. Captains, as a rule, wish to obey loyally and thoroughly. Mistakes are not intentional.

If a signal is executed in a manner contrary to the intention of the admiral, either it is an ambiguous signal, or it has been misunderstood. Unforeseen contingencies of this kind are certain to happen in war. Practices in peace illustrate what such contingencies may be, and develop the necessary measures to prevent them.

A very common method of pointing out mistakes is to signal what was *ordered* and what should have *happened*, omitting to state what was actually *done*. But *all* these points should be inserted in the signal.

Officers or men should never be allowed to state what *might*, *could*, or *should* have been done. The point at issue is what WAS or what IS. Much valuable time is lost in

explaining the circumstances on the theory of what might, could, or should have been done.

Before finding fault by signal, the admiral should ask the captain in question how a mistake occurred. By so doing it can be seen whether it is necessary to find fault or not. If the explanation is satisfactory the captain should be so informed.

Much unnecessary irritation and bad feeling caused by sudden and drastic signals may thus be avoided.

The admiral will often find that the mistake was a natural mistake, which he himself might have made had he been in the captain's place. When captains know that the admiral is scrupulously fair, they become devoted to him.

An admiral should always be most careful that he is right himself before finding fault with those under him. If he should afterwards find that his contention was wrong, or that there was a misunderstanding, the admiral should invariably acknowledge his mistake. This action commands respect and is only chivalrous and seamanlike.

When an admiral has satisfied himself that anything, no matter how small, is not carried out according to orders, he should call attention to it by signal (as a rule, by a general signal), and by thus pointing out the mistake to the Fleet, he prevents the same error from occurring again.

In such matters as clothes not properly stopped on, boats and booms not square, etc., an admiral should inquire who is responsible. If men are not standing to attention when the colours are hoisted, he should ask for the name of the officer of the watch. If a boat is improperly handled under sail or oars, he should ask for the name of the officer or coxswain of the boat.

The admiral's staff should always inform him of such matters as boats pulling badly, or not being run up to the davit head, men not standing properly to attention, or not doubling to obey all orders of the pipe, etc. The effect of a signal calling attention to these matters is lost if it is made some time after the event.

There should always be an officer responsible for every duty on board a man-of-war, and the admiral should always make on these occasions the signal, "Indicate name of officer responsible."

The admiral should always make sure, when finding fault with a ship, that his flagship is absolutely correct as regards the particular detail in question. If this is not the case he should call his flagship's attention to it at the same time.

Admirals and captains are often heard saying, "Look at the way they are doing so and so," referring to boat pulling or to the way a rope is handled, or a boat hoisted, quite forgetting that it is the fault of the admiral or captain that the duties are done badly or are not carried out according to their satisfaction. The admiral is responsible for the whole administration, smartness and efficiency of his Fleet; the captains are responsible for the whole administration, smartness and efficiency of their ships. In the Royal Navy, officers and men are loyal to the core, and everything that is done badly is due to the senior officer of the Fleet or of the ship not giving his orders clearly, and not showing beforehand what he wants done, and how it is to be done.

The admiral should never give an order relative to routine or administration without seeing that it is obeyed. Many orders given in a memorandum or circular are forgotten after the first few weeks or months, and so they lapse.

An officer should be told off to summarise and report that such orders have been carried out during the preceding week.

It is of no use for the admiral to give orders and directions unless he sees that they are actually carried out in the manner he intended.

If the admiral is not careful that all orders of his own and of the Admiralty are punctually obeyed, he will find that some captains accurately carry out the order and some do not. This irregularity causes discontent in some ships

and slackness in others, disturbing that harmony which should prevail in a fleet. A "happy-go-lucky" method breeds irritation.

If papers are ordered to be sent in, or drills are ordered to be carried out, or if any matter connected with the Fleet is ordered to be undertaken at some future date, the admiral should always make a signal or reminder some days before the date. The argument that a man "*ought* to know and *ought* not to forget" does not prevent irritation if he *does* forget.

If an officer or man is slack, he should always be found fault with; it distresses the good officers and men to see that a slack individual gets along as well as those that are smart.

If the admiral observes anything incorrect relative to individuals in a ship's company, such as dress, etc., he should inquire whether the irregularity is common to the ship, and have this irregularity corrected right through the ship. Failing this method, he may be often finding fault on the same point, instead of having the whole matter put right by one signal or memorandum.

The admiral should often look over his own station orders to remind himself of the orders he has issued.

An admiral should, if possible, always send *written* messages to officers, in order to avoid constantly sending for officers. He should always date the messages. This maxim applies to the admiral's flagship as well as to other ships.

Sending messages verbally may cause great irritation, and may be prejudicial to discipline, for two distinct reasons:—

(i) The messenger may give the message in terms which are very irritating. Every one on the bridge hears the message delivered.

(ii) Human nature being what it is, the admiral, like other people, may be in a state of irritation, more particularly if he wants a thing done quickly or if he thinks that things are not being done well. He is not so likely to blurt out some rough and irritating expression if he writes the message or order.

In addition, it is neither good for discipline nor congenial to that respect which is shown to officers, if the signalman or others hear a rough message delivered to the chief of the staff, captain, or other officers.

The admiral should always let the Fleet under his command know beforehand the time which he intends to carry out practices, or to anchor or to weigh the Fleet. This rule particularly applies to the hours set apart for meals. Disturbance in the middle of meals causes needless irritation, and work never goes well in a man-of-war or anywhere else under irritation.

Admirals should as far as is possible let the officers and men of the Fleet know the dates of arrivals and departures from ports, so that all should be in a position to communicate with their friends and to arrange their private affairs conveniently.

If the admiral intends to be afloat with his flag flying very near the dinner-hour, or at any time that station orders annul guards and bands, he should signal "Annul Guards and Bands." Without such signal some ships are certain to turn them up while others will not do so, causing confusion.

*When the admiral is inspecting a division of men, all ratings should take off their caps.* The admiral should first inspect the chief petty officers and petty officers, and when he has done these ratings should be ordered to put on their caps. By so doing, the fact is emphasised that the petty officer's position in the ship is superior, and that the admiral recognises it to be so.

The admiral should see the sick in hospital constantly. His visit cheers the men, and shows them that the admiral knows that they are sick, and that he sympathises with them There have been many cases where the interest shown by the admiral in a man who is dangerously ill has so cheered the patient that he has taken a turn for the better and has ultimately recovered.

If a serious accident occurs on board any ship, either at

drill or in the execution of other duty whereby officers o men are killed or wounded, the admiral should inform th whole Fleet with regret, giving the names of officers and mer This procedure is respectful to those under his command wh are killed or wounded in the execution of their duty. The have suffered or died for their country just as much as thoug killed or wounded in action with the enemy. The admira should personally go and see the wounded daily, if possible.

An admiral should let his officers know that he expect everything on board the ships to be shipshape, that is to say kept in such condition and order as befits one of Hi Majesty's ships of war.

The admiral should always give as much leave as possible having regard to the exigencies of the service and of duty A free gangway for special leave men should be kept at al possible places, so that one watch can always go ashore daily if they are so minded.

Trouble with regard to breaking leave and drunkenness i generally brought about by want of discretion on the part o the commanding officer in giving leave. Keeping men or board for long periods, and then letting them go ashore with a great deal of money, involves the temptation to some to break leave, and to others to drink more than is good for them.

A free gangway is thoroughly appreciated by the men. The fact that they can go ashore if they like often conduces to their health and comfort, and does not provoke that irritation caused by the knowledge that leave cannot be given.

A man who breaks his leave, and so allows other men to do his work, should be placed in a "Break Leave Party," and given any extra jobs of work that may require execution, in order to make up for the time he has lost. Men in the "Break Leave Party" should be mustered every two hours from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the discretion of the captain, according to the number of hours they have allowed other men to do their work.

This mustering should continue on a scale of two days for

every hour of absence, but a total of fourteen days should not be exceeded.

The foregoing arrangement should not be considered as punishment, but as making up the time lost to the State by the men's absence from their duties, which left other men to do their work, and should therefore not be entered in the daily record.

A general leave man who persistently breaks his leave should be put in the limited leave list, and the time and place at which he should be allowed ashore should be entirely at the discretion of the captain, and if possible he should not be allowed ashore when the rest of the ship's company are on leave.

When a notorious leave-breaker goes on leave, it is well to send ashore a description, upon which are noted the hour and the date upon which he should again be aboard his ship. By this means he is often recovered before he has broken his leave for any length of time.

First-class petty officers should always be given leave when chief petty officers get leave. The former are generally far older men, and have had longer experience in the Service than most chief petty officers.

Badge-men and "men who have never broken their leave in the ship" should be given leave whenever possible. Plenty of liberty reduces break-leave to a minimum, and also reduces inebriety to a marked extent.

Attention to the points of administration enumerated above will go far to create in the Fleet, not only comfort and happiness but, that constant readiness for emergency which is the result of a high state of discipline.

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